



Charles Crismon

A DECADE IN THE LIFE OF CHARLES CRISMON (1838-1848)

From his baptism to his move to California,
based on writings of his contemporaries
and historical sources.

Kim Bateman

July 2024

Roster of the Known Ponca Heads of Families

Allen, Jude

ANDRUS, MILO 1846.10.03.

BAINBRIDGE, FREDERICK

Bartholomew, Noah, W.

Barton, Asa

Beliss, Sister 2

Billings, Titus

Bingham, Erastus* 18

Boyes, George 8

Boynton, H. N.

Brunson, Lewison Lemon 6

Burns, Enoch

Butler, John L.

Call, Anson* 16

Call, Cyril*

Call, Harvey*

Clark, Hyrum

Clark, John

Colbert, William 10

Crismon, Charles*

Dalton, John

Dalton, Simeon

Dame, (Daine) Darwin, 15

Davis, Joseph, David

Demming, Moses 5

Drake, Daniel 5

Draper, Brother

Edwards, Thomas

Edwards, William

Emmett, James

Emmett, Moses S.

Emmett, Simpson

Fellows, Albert 7

FULLER, EDWARD MEEKS

GOODELL, NEWTON

Green, Robert Kenyon 9

Griffin, Burrier

Haight, Isaac

HANCOCK, SOLOMON 7

Harding, Dwight 7

Hatch, Lorenzo H.

Hewitt, Richard

Hinman, Lyman

HILL, ISAAC JOHN 7

Hobson, Jesse

Holbrook, Chandler*

Holbrook, Joseph* 7

Holt, James

Houtz, Jacob 5

HUTCHINS, HARRIET

JESSE, WIDOW

KAY, JOHN

KAY, WILLIAM

Kempton, Jerome B. 2

KNIGHT, NEWEL 9

Knight, Sister

LARSON, LARS

LASLEY, JOHN WELTON

Lewis, Beason 7

Lewis, David 7

Lewis, Nariah 5

LOTHRUP, ASAH

Mace, Hyrum

Mathews, William 9

McArthur, Daniel Duncan

Mikesell, John A. 7

MILLER, GEORGE

Moffett, Armstead

Myers, George

Noble, Lucian 6

Nowlin, Bryan 8

OSTRANDER, Eliza

Morrison 4

Pace, Eliza Baldwin

PAGE, FINDLEY

Porter, James 7

Potter, Gardner G.

Potter, William W.

Putnam, S.

RICHARDSON, EBENEZER

Riddle, John

RUSSELL, ALLEN

RUSSELL, JONATHAN

SHEPHERD, RANSON 5

Shurtleff, Vincent

SMITH, BROTHER

STAINES, William C.

Stanley, A. S.

Stewart, William

Sweets, George 6

TOLMAN, JUDSON

Truman, Jacob

TUTTLE

WADE, SALLY M. (with

Daine)

Wilkinson, John

WILSON, ZACHARIAH

WINN, MR.

Young, Sister

GREEN = EMMETT CO.

BLUE = MILLER CO.

PURPLE = OTHER

BLACK = UNKNOWN

Lower case = in Ponca
camp roster February 1847

Macedonia Branch *

Number after name: known
family members

A Decade in the Life of Charles Crismon

Sometime in the winter of 1838, Charles Crismon was converted to Mormonism by Elijah Elmer, a fellow millwright.¹

That Charles would be baptized a Mormon at all is a bit of a mystery to me. As far as I can tell, he was never in his life what I would call a religious person. Other than a very brief proselyting mission and stints on high councils, Charles Crismon never held an ecclesiastical office that I know of in the church.² He was a practical man, a doer, the kind of person that people turned to when they needed a difficult job done. Brigham Young is said to have remarked, "That man Crismon can get more things done, faster and better than any man I know."³ No one else in his family had been interested in Mormonism. In fact, his 73 year old father, George Chrisman,⁴ was bitter about Charles' conversion, and the two never reconciled. Not one of Charles' eleven siblings ever joined the Mormon Church. And at the time of his baptism, even Charles' wife wanted nothing to do with Mormonism.

Charles' grandfather, Michael Christmann, had immigrated from the Rhineland through Philadelphia in 1748 as an 18 year old trying to escape the Napoleonic Wars. He obtained a land grant in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina at Dutch Buffalo Creek, so named for the German-speaking immigrants who settled there and was murdered by an overly eager militia captain when he refused to take sides in the American Revolution. The land and mill were inherited by Michael's oldest son, also named Michael, who sold it to his brother, Charles' father George Christman, when George married Elizabeth Hagler in 1788. Around 1800 George sold out and moved his family to the Sinking Fork of Little River in Hopkinsville, Kentucky where he ran another mill. He joined the militia as a 59-year-old Kentucky Volunteer and fought under Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812.

¹ Elijah Elmer designated himself as a miller in the 1850 census. He had arrived in Illinois from Vermont as a 21 year old in the fall of 1831 seeking a new life after a brush with the law. He worked in Greene County for six dollars a month for four years and then married Mrs. Polly Pierce. His own baptism was in the summer of 1836 by James Snow, who will appear later in this story. In August Elijah and Polly had a son named Nephi, who died as an infant. <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/timeline/GSBB-Y61>. Elmer had not yet been ordained an Elder, so Charles' baptism was performed by the branch president in Greene and Morgan Counties, Levi Merrick. <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/sources/KGCB-N2B>.

² He served on high councils in the Ponca settlement, San Bernardino, and Mesa, Arizona.

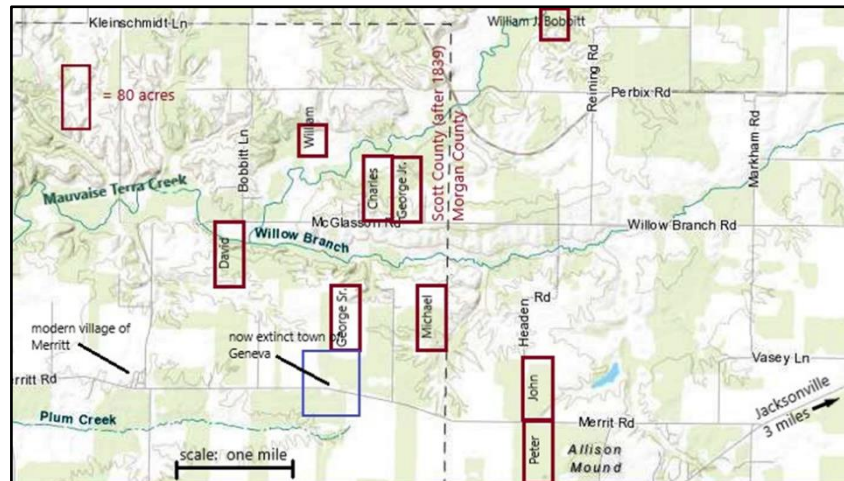
³ W. Earl Merrill, Charles Crismon, Pioneer Magazine--Sons of Utah Pioneers. Vol. 39, No. 2, p. 24.

⁴ The spelling of this German surname evolved over three generations. His father's name was initially spelled Christman, and then evolved to Chrisman. Both of these spellings were applied at various times to all of his sons including Charles in the U.S. censuses through 1850, although Crisman was used for George and his sons in the Illinois state census in 1835. The name was spelled Chrisman in Charles' marriage and Illinois land records. Charles' surname was spelled Crisman in the 1860 census, Christman in 1870, and finally the modern form of Crismon in 1880, which is probably the time that the spelling became consistent. I will use the spelling Crismon throughout the book for Charles.

In the spring of 1827 when Charles was about 20 years old,⁵ George Christman moved most of his family and their in-laws the Bobbitts to Morgan County, Illinois and settled on farmland which was later incorporated as Geneva a few miles west of Jacksonville.⁶

When Charles was 23 he married Mary “Polly” Hill,⁷ a 16 year old from Carlinville, which was about 45 miles south of Jacksonville. Charles’ land grant wasn’t issued until December 1, 1830, but my guess is that he had built a cabin on his 80 acres. The census that year showed that they had a teenage girl living with them, probably Polly’s 14 year old sister Emily. Morgan County’s population was 12,709 including 19 free black persons, an impressive increase from its population of three people just a decade earlier.

Charles’ neighbor, Elisha Kellogg, filed a real estate development plat in 1832 proposing to create a town named Geneva. The new town, which is now extinct, was 1.5 miles east of the present day village of Merritt, and seven miles west of Jacksonville. The property of Charles’ father was next to the town’s northern edge.



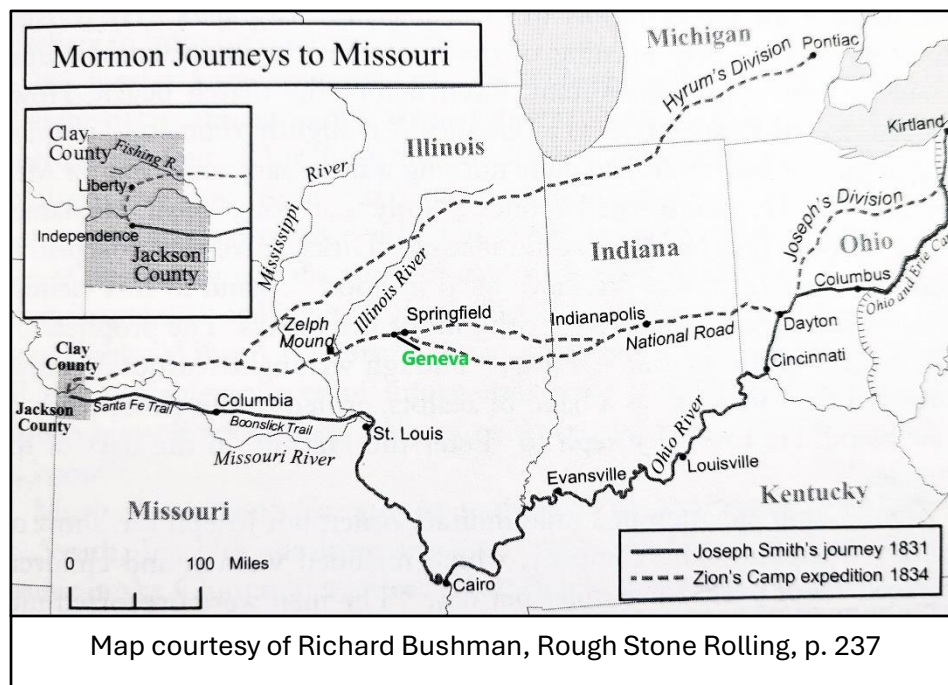
Except for waterways and Indian trails, there were few established routes at that time for travel through the western states. The most important of these was the National Road, which had been commissioned by Congress to create a route for western migration all the way to Jefferson City, Missouri, but after the financial panic of 1837 construction stopped at Terre Haute on the western border of Indiana. Illinois began to create its own road from Terre Haute sometime before 1825, which greatly facilitated immigration. It became known as the Old State Road and ran west across the center of the state from Springfield through Jacksonville (known locally as “State Street”) and right through little Geneva to Naples on the Illinois River. Those two roads carried a lot of the outside world right past the Christman family.

⁵ Charles was born in Hopkinsville, Kentucky on Christmas Day, 1807.

⁶ The city of Jacksonville, Illinois was founded in 1825 by settlers from New England on the state road from Springfield to the Illinois River. It was so named just at the time that the “corrupt bargain” made John Quincy Adams the sixth president after Andrew Jackson had won the most popular votes.

⁷ The Hill family moved to Illinois from Duck River, Tennessee. They spent the summer on the way in Kentucky, Christian County, reaching Macoupin County, Illinois in the fall. That was the very year that Carlinville was founded, so they were early settlers. It was made the county seat in 1829.

The Church of Jesus Christ, soon known informally as the Mormons, had been organized in the state of New York about three years after the arrival of the Christman family in Illinois, but it soon spread south to Ohio and began spreading westward along the Missouri River. In June 1831, Joseph Smith sent 22 elders in pairs overland to Missouri, preaching on their way.⁸ Since these elders traveled by land, it is likely that they traveled through Jacksonville and Geneva. In August, William McClellan passed through Jacksonville on his way to meet Joseph Smith in Jackson County, Missouri. He wrote, "...thence twelve miles I stopped to take a little refreshment and feed my horses, then 10 miles to Illinois River. Paid 12 cents, stayed all night on the west bank." He must have passed through Geneva, which already had a name, for it became a post office in 1831.



Joseph Smith visited the Colesville Branch in Jackson County, Missouri again on April 24, 1832, but did not pass through Geneva, arriving by stage from St. Louis in the company of Titus Billings.⁹

During the summer of 1832, Mormon migration from Kirtland, Ohio to Jackson County, Missouri began to accelerate. Almost 100 members of the church arrived there to settle in Zion, and many of them traveled through Jacksonville and Geneva. In the spring of 1833, Mormon missionaries Parley P. Pratt and William McLellan baptized Levi Merrick and his wife Philinda at Spring Prairie, Greene County on the Apple River about 22 miles south of Geneva near Morgan County's southern border. Merrick had lived there since the summer of 1830 as a trained protestant minister.

Zion's Camp, a quasi-military group, was put together in Kirtland in 1834 by Joseph Smith to march to Missouri and help the struggling Mormons there to defend their property. The commander was Joseph Smith himself. Two hundred seven men, 11 women, and 11 children marched west along

⁸ Among them were Solomon Hancock and Newel Knight, both of whom later were part of the Ponca Company, which we will later discuss in detail.)

⁹ As we shall discover, Billings later led the Ponca settlers to Winter Quarters in April 1847 after Bishop Miller was released.

the National Road, reaching Jacksonville on June 1, 1834. They camped on the south fork of Mauvaise Terra Creek a mile east of town to rest for the Sabbath. In the prophet's own words:

Agreeable to my instructions, about sunset Brother Roger Orton proclaimed aloud that there would be preaching under the trees within the camp at half-past ten o'clock on the morrow. There was only one stranger in the camp to hear the appointment... We had preaching, and many of the inhabitants of the town came to hear. Elder John Carter, who had formerly been a Baptist preacher, spoke in the morning and was followed by four other elders¹⁰ in the course of the day, all of whom had formerly been preachers for different denominations. (Fearing spies from Missouri, the prophet had not wanted to reveal that they were Mormons, and so they posed as itinerant preachers.) During the day, many questions were asked, but none could learn our names, professions, business, or destination; and although they suspected we were "Mormons," they were very civil.¹¹

The next morning Zion's Camp arrived in Geneva. The following event¹² likely occurred there around that time, but not during the march of Zion's Camp.

A few years after the town was platted a number of residents in its vicinity became imbued with Mormon doctrines, and it is said that Brigham Young spent some time proselyting near there. The Mormon converts in their enthusiasm planned the erection of a temple at Geneva. Framing timbers were hewed and hauled and other material gathered, but one dark night a band of men from Winchester visited the spot where the building material was gathered and the next morning it was a heap of ashes.

I think it is more likely that the Mormons were aiming to build a meetinghouse, not a temple as Heintz imagined. The mob from Winchester came from about seven miles south of Geneva. It is clear that the Christman families had more than a casual brush with Mormonism. And there would be much more to come.

One event in Charles Crismon's life which may have primed him for the Mormon message was a tragedy. Charles' two years older brother, Peter, was killed two days before Christmas in 1835 when a millstone fell on him as he was trying to repair it. The event shook the entire Christman family, but Peter had been especially close to Charles. Peter left a wife named Mary "Polly" Williams, four daughters between two months and nine years of age, and a four year old boy. The two older girls moved in with their grandparents, George and Elizabeth Christman, and Charles and his wife Polly Hill took in Polly Williams and the three younger children. To make the tragedy worse, in 1837 their two year olds died: Peter's baby, Barbara Ellen, and Charles and Polly's third child, James.

¹⁰ In his own diary, Heber C. Kimball noted that the "four other elders" mentioned by the prophet were Brigham Young, Orson Hyde, Lyman Johnson, and Orson Pratt.

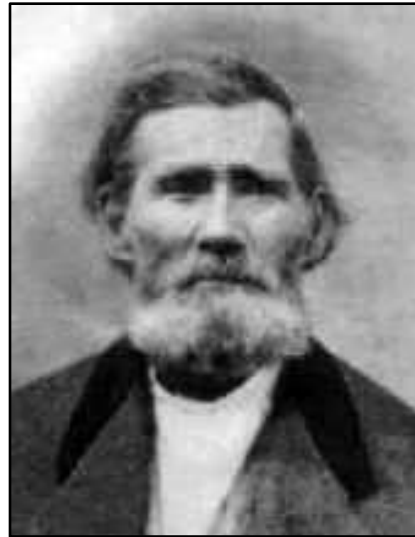
¹¹ History of the Church, Vol. 2, pp. 77-78.

¹² Frank J. Heintz, *The First Settlers in Morgan County: The Kelloggs and Charles Collins*. Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society (1908-1984) Published by: University of Illinois Press on behalf of the Illinois State Historical Society. Vol. 18, No. 1, Jacksonville Centennial (April 1925), p. 84 (16 pages).

At the time of Charles' baptism his household included the two Pollys,¹³ his three children, and two of Peter's, all under seven. He would soon meet the Prophet.

On January 12, 1838, Joseph Smith, his wife Emma, and Sidney Rigdon fled Kirtland on horseback, bound for Far West. Four days later Brigham Young caught up with them about 60 miles from Kirtland,¹⁴ along with their children: Frederick, 18 months, Joseph Smith III, five, and their adopted daughter, Julia Murdock, who was six. Emma was about 20 weeks pregnant. Brigham Young raised \$300 from a brother Tomlinson to aid in their journey in covered wagons to Far West but did not travel with them. Rigdon dropped out at Terre Haute, Indiana and continued later with his own family. The Prophet's father, Joseph Smith Sr., also fled Kirtland that January with his extended household but they stopped over at New Portage, Ohio for three months.

Around February 15th, Joseph and Emma stopped at Geneva, where the newly baptized Charles Crismon and his missionary Elijah Elmer joined them for the rest of the trip.¹⁵ They left Geneva around February 24th and traveled about 120 miles to Louisiana, Missouri where they crossed the Mississippi River on the ferry. Brigham Young had come by steamboat from Kirtland and may have joined them there. At Huntsville, still 106 miles from Far West, they were met with money and teams from Far West¹⁶ where they arrived March 14th. Three days later Joseph's brother Samuel Smith arrived with his own family.¹⁷



Elijah Elmer

Their older brother Hyrum Smith had remained in Kirtland for several weeks to help organize the Kirtland Camp, but he sent his household belongings ahead by boat and left by wagon in advance of the camp in the beginning of March¹⁸ with several Mormon families and ten more of the Smith family including Mary Fielding and their five children, Hanna Grinnell, who had been living with Mary, and others.

Rigdon finally arrived in Far West with his family on April 4, 1838, just in time for General Conference, where Elijah Elmer was ordained an elder by George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff. On April 18th Joseph Smith proclaimed the land around Wight's ferry north of Gallatin in Daviess County to be the site where Adam had settled after being banished from the Garden of Eden and

¹³ Since both women in Charles' household were called Polly, I will henceforth refer to Peter's widow as Polly Williams.

¹⁴ History of the Church, vol. 3, p. 2.

¹⁵ Orson Whitney, History of Utah, Volume 4, p. 112-113. Joseph recorded only a few details of his trip from Kirtland and did not mention Charles or Elijah.

¹⁶ History of the Church, vol. 3 p.10.

¹⁷ History of the Church (Reorganized) II:137.) According to his mother, Samuel had settled at Marrowbone (later Shady Grove) just over the Daviess County line before she and the rest of the Smith family arrived in June.

¹⁸ Harrison Burgess gave the specific date of March 26th. (Sketch of a Well-Spent Life, p. 68).

named it Adam-ondi-Ahman. The population of Gallatin had exploded to 1,500. There were 150 houses in Far West.

Martha Crismon wrote in her autobiography that her father Charles returned from Far West to Illinois “for mother, who had not accepted the gospel.”¹⁹ He and Elijah Elmer could have arrived home around April 24th if they left directly after conference and may have arrived as late as mid-May.

By then Joseph Smith Sr. and his family had left New Portage for Far West in seven wagons, but they were slowed down while the Smith boys did missionary work along the way until their mother Lucy Mack Smith made them stop and hurry along. The Smith family party was large with about 24 people including the grandparents, ten other adults, and twelve children. The elderly parents were not well and very fatigued.

By then Hyrum Smith was 350 miles ahead of them near Terre Haute, Indiana, where he was held up for four days at the end of the National Road where it was under construction, waiting for it to dry. There he ran into James C. Snow and his bride Eliza Ann Carter, whom he had sent ahead to scout for a route and camping places for the large Kirtland Camp, which would soon be leaving. The Snows had become stranded at Terre Haute for a few weeks when one of their oxen died. Generously, Hyrum invited them to join his party, directing 19-year-old Eliza Ann to drive Hyrum’s baggage wagon while the men walked.

When Hyrum’s party reached Jacksonville, one of his horses died, which left the Snows stranded again, waiting to be picked up when the Kirtland Camp passed through. Hyrum arranged for the Snows to be boarded by the local branch president, Levi Merrick. While waiting for the Kirtland Camp, James Snow baptized Peter Crismon’s widow Polly Williams.²⁰ Interestingly, Snow is the missionary who two years earlier had baptized Elijah Elmer and his wife Polly Pierce. Hyrum secured another horse and moved on toward Far West about a week later, arriving on May 27th. The next day he went with Joseph to seek a location in Daviess County to live. Hyrum returned to Far West on the 30th and Joseph followed two days later, just in time for the birth of his son Alexander Hale Smith.

On June 4th the rest of the Smith family arrived in Geneva. Although Lucy Mack Smith’s book makes no mention of it, they stopped there for a day or two. Joseph Smith Sr. conducted a meeting there in which he gave patriarchal blessings in the home of Elisha Richards.²¹ Levi Merrick received a blessing from Father Smith that day, and James Snow, whom Hyrum had left behind, was there to record the blessing. This is when Father Smith and Levi Merrick healed Charles Crismon. Martha Crismon wrote:

Father had taken very ill, and the doctors gave him up to die when Father Smith and an elder from Missouri (probably Lewis Robbins, a member of the Smith party who had lived in Clay County) stopped at their house on their return from Kirtland. They expressed a desire to see father, and mother objected on account of her disbelief, but they went into his room, spoke

¹⁹ Church History Library MS 32057 p. 1.

²⁰ Another source says that Elijah Elmer baptized Polly Williams.

²¹ In the 1830 census Elisha Richards appears on the same page as four of the Crismons including Charles. He was probably a Mormon who became a Strangite, since he lived in Wisconsin from 1850-1887.).

to him, knelt down by the bed and administered to him, telling him he should be made well and soon be able to go to Missouri, that mother should be convinced, and that he should take his family with him. In ten days, he (Charles) was able to transact his business and sell his property. This convinced my mother, and she was baptized by Elder Levi Merrick.²² She became a faithful worker in the church and always had a testimony that she had seen the power of healing.²³

If Charles sold his property within ten days of his miraculous healing and took his family at once to Caldwell County, Missouri, as Martha seems to suggest, he would have left around the middle of June, but the Crismons actually left at least five weeks later. It makes sense that most of what has been written about this part of Charles Crismon's life is based on Martha's interesting and detailed version, since Martha was an eyewitness. However, this is not her only demonstrable inaccuracy.²⁴ Much of my own writing in this piece is derived from a literal interpretation of parts of her story, so you should also read my version with caution.

The Kirtland Camp finally got underway on its trip of over 750 miles, on July 5, 1838 with over 500 people, 59 wagons, 97 horses, 22 oxen, 69 cows and one bull. When they reached Dayton, Ohio on July 30th, they paused for a month for the men to earn supplies by working on the Springfield and Dayton turnpike. During the pause, the leaders reorganized and disciplined the group.

On August 20th Nathan K. Knight, George W. Brooks, Daniel Bliss and their families left the Kirtland Camp together. Knight had been investigated for unchristian-like conduct and was expelled from the company. Brooks' wife had been drinking tea and using profane language. She was not a Mormon and said she did not need to follow the rules. Bliss was not ejected but left with Brooks because they were traveling together. Others left the camp during the month for various reasons. Some of them made their way to Caldwell County on their own or in smaller groups. Others settled in Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois, some later joining the Saints in Nauvoo. When the work on the turnpike contract was finished, the Kirtland Camp hit the road again on August 27th, their numbers considerably diminished.

It was around this time Charles Crismon and his family arrived in Caldwell County.²⁵ The group consisted of Charles and his wife Polly, his sister-in-law Polly Williams with her seven year old Henry James and five year old Elizabeth Jane (Polly Williams' two older children were still living with their grandparents), Polly's unmarried 18 year old sister Elizabeth Hill, and their own three children Martha Jane, George, and Esther Ann, ages six, five, and two. That's a lot of women and children for one adult man to manage.

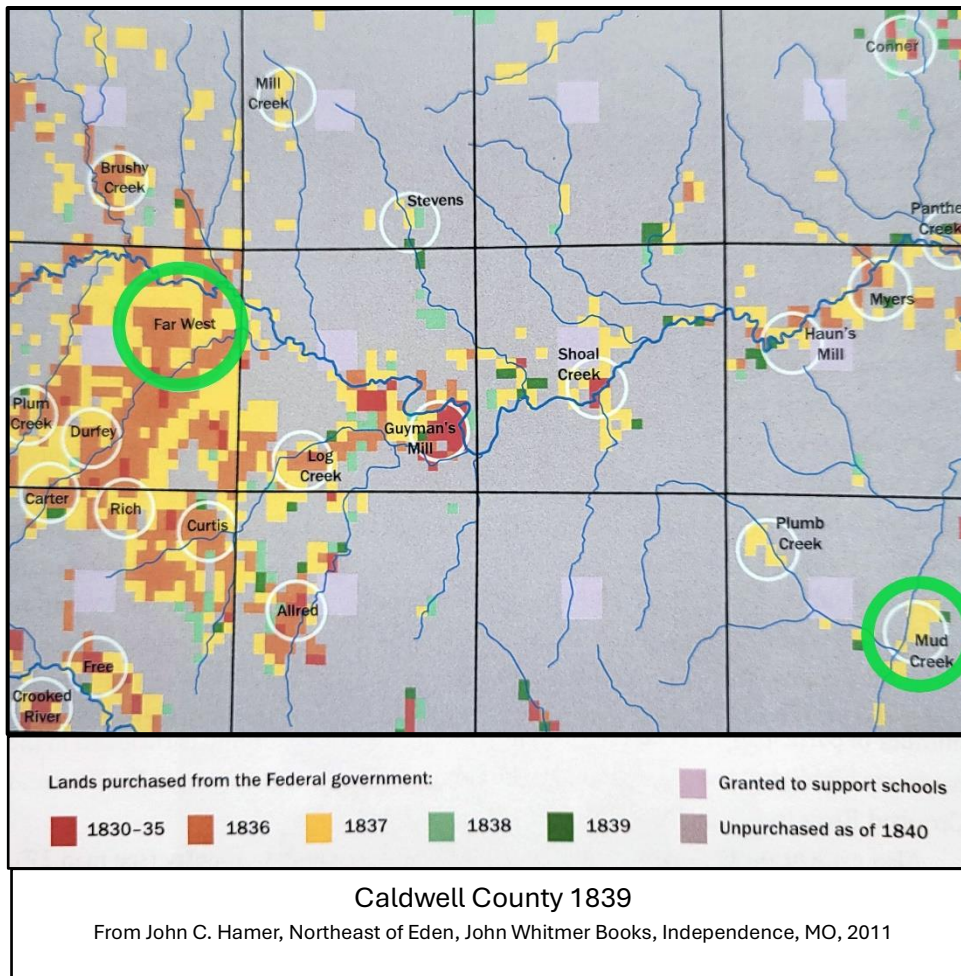
²² It is likely that Polly Crismon's 18 year old sister Elizabeth Hill was baptized at the same time.

²³ Church History Library MS 32057, p. 3.

²⁴ For example, Martha says that she was seven years old at the time of Charles baptism, but she did not turn seven until September 8, 1838 (or later) according to multiple sources. Martha also wrote that the family went west with Merricks, but the Merricks didn't leave their home in neighboring Greene County until October 7th (as we will see later) and did not arrive in Caldwell County until October 30th.

²⁵ Orson Whitney, History of Utah, Volume 4, p. 112-113.

Charles bought a house, possibly one that Charles had picked out during his earlier visit. According to Martha, it was 25 miles from Far West. If that distance is correct, it could have been in one of only a few settlements. Gallatin is 25 miles north of Far West, but that was a gentile town in Daviess County, where there was great enmity against the Mormons. That August there had been a riot at the polls when gentiles tried to prevent the Mormon men from voting, and crops and barns were being burned down. And most of the Mormons in that county were living at Adam-ondi-Ahman, which is 30 miles from Far West. It seems unlikely that Crismons settled there. Twenty-five miles east of Far West was Whitney's Mill in Livingston County, another gentile stronghold, which was also hostile to the saints. Of the several Mormon settlements within Caldwell County, the only one that was 25 miles from Far West was the Mud Creek settlement near Kinney Grove, which straddled the southeast border between Caldwell and Ray Counties about four miles south of Hawn's Mill. Mud Creek was 22 miles southeast of Far West as the crow flies, but exactly 25 miles by road.²⁶



²⁶ Mud Creek settlement is now the tiny community of Braymer, which had 737 inhabitants in 2020.

Property records show two Latter-day Saint families living near each other in multiple cabins at Mud Creek--William Casper and Bradley Barlow Wilson with his seven adult sons.²⁷ Together they had claimed almost a section of land. Three Missourian families owned adjacent property: David Edmons, John Study, and James McBee. About a mile away lived another Mormon, Elias Benner, who had built a mill on the northern branch of Mud Creek near Tenney's Grove. Martha Crismon wrote that the Crismon family lived there in peace for a time in a house that they had purchased. This could have come from one of the Mormon families, for example the property vacated two of the Casper boys who had moved south, or from the Missourians. (Since I only have records of property purchased from the government, it is also possible that more families were squatting nearby or had bought property from the original owners.)

In the last part of August, the Saints were ordered by the other settlers to leave DeWitt in Carroll County. One of the Mormon leaders, John Murdock, came up from DeWitt to Far West to confer with the brethren about the request to vacate. He wrote that he traveled 33 miles from DeWitt to Brother Wilson's house on Tenney's Grove (Mud Creek settlement). No one was home, so he went to sleep in one of the beds but was awakened by a large number of Wilson women returning home, who were shocked to find a man sleeping in their bed.²⁸ They had been driven out by the threat of a violent mob. This was probably just shortly before Crismons arrived.

Meanwhile, on September 17th the Kirtland Camp was camping just east of Jacksonville, Illinois. The number of Saints in the Kirtland Camp was now down to 260 people, about half of the number that had left had Kirtland.

Here is the account of their arrival in Geneva.²⁹

From thence we came to Geneva, a small, dusty place and encamped by David Orton's on a prairie.³⁰ Most of the camp was late arriving...and some did not come up until morning.... James C. Snow, whom we found near Geneva, joined us. At Geneva is a church of 15 or 20 members. A few of the church are also in Jacksonville.

Samuel D. Tyler, a member of the Kirtland Camp wrote:³¹

I saw Elder James C. Snow a few miles east of Geneva. He was at his house, had been sick. He is the first elder I heard preach the fullness of the everlasting gospel.... (Geneva) is mostly prairie this side of Jacksonville, high rolling ones covered with extensive fields of corn and stacks of prairie hay. Large herds of cattle are seen, and they are fat, and first rate horses.... Passed over prairies and groves through a beautiful fertile country.

²⁷ The Wilsons had sold their Ohio farms soon after joining the church in May 1836 and moved to Mud Creek. One of the brothers, Dunbar Wilson, is mentioned in D&C 124:132.)

²⁸ This was the home of Whitford Gill Wilson, the oldest of the seven sons. Besides his wife, he had seven daughters ages one through eleven at the time.

²⁹ History of the Church, Vol. III, page 140.

³⁰ David Orton was in Morgan County in 1840 census, on the same page as several Chrismans. He died November 1849 in Adams County. He was probably a Mormon who didn't emigrate.

³¹ Church History Library, Journal MS 1761.

They didn't stay long, just overnight, but many of the camp dropped out and settled in Geneva and the surrounding area,³² hearing rumors of violence against the Mormons in Missouri. The remaining families crossed the Illinois River by ferry five miles south of Naples. They crossed the Mississippi River on the Louisiana ferry September 20th, and on the 24th the camp stopped to reorganize and consolidate since so many had dropped out. They were hearing more disturbing news of unrest in Missouri.

James Foster³³ proposed to disband due to increasing rumors. The council objected, but halted until an embassy could be sent to Far West to determine whether it was safe to go on. Then they left the main road the next day about a half mile west of Keatsville and took the road to Chillicothe along the Grand River, which they felt would be safer. James Foster left them there the next day to go by way of DeWitt "to see his son-in-law Jonathan Thompson,"^{34 35} However, according to Julia Foster Hampton's story, she and Jonathan were members of Kirtland Camp and left together from Keatsville with her father via "a different route," a bad decision, since they were soon driven out of DeWitt.³⁶

On September 30th the Kirtland Camp crossed Shoal Creek to camp overnight and reached Far West around five p.m. on October 2nd. They were directed to settle 30 miles north in Adam-ondi-Ahman, where they arrived on October 4th. Many members of the camp who had been left behind for one reason or another trickled in over the next four weeks.

On October 7th the Crismons' friend Levi Merrick left his home with a group of latecomers from Kirtland Camp. There were eleven (or nine by another account) wagons including Levi with his wife Philinda and four children aged eight months to nine years. He had sold his farm on Apple Creek for \$700.³⁷ With him were dropouts from the Kirtland Camp including Joseph Young (Brigham Young's older brother), his wife Jane Adeline, and three children aged one, two, and four, Nathan K. Knight³⁸ with wife Lucinda and six children 7-15, Warren Smith, his wife Amanda, five children aged 2-11, and Stephen Shumway with his pregnant wife Wealthy and a six year old son. Another was David Deming. I can't identify the other families with certainty. One may have been Jonas Putnam, who with Deming had been part of Joseph Young's group in the camp. The group crossed the Mississippi at the Louisiana ferry on October 13th.³⁹

The earlier arrivers from the Kirtland Camp were already under pressure from the mobs. On the 15th, a hundred Mormon militia men were sent from Far West under George M. Hinkle to protect Adam-ondi-Ahman. Houses were burned in Daviess County including Don Carlos Smith's house.

³² <http://mormonplaces.byu.edu/data/entities/480230>.

³³ Foster was an elder, who had been a member of Zion's Camp in 1834 and was a leader in Kirtland Camp.

³⁴ His son-in-law was actually named Jonathan Hampton, not Thompson.

³⁵ History of the Church vol. III, p. 146.

³⁶ Jonathan had been baptized by Brigham Young in 1833. After Jonathan died in 1844, Julia married Brigham Young.

³⁷ Apple Creek runs through Belltown, 25 miles south of Geneva and about five miles north of Carrolton.

³⁸ Knight is a person of importance later in the story.

³⁹ John Young affidavit of Haun's Mill Massacre, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, BYU Library Vault MSS 791.

He was away on a mission, and his wife Agnes with her two children waded the Grand River and walked three miles to safety at Lyman Wight's house.⁴⁰

Meanwhile, Levi Merrick and his party were still making their way through eastern Missouri. On the 18th Stephen Shumway dropped out at Huntsville, about 110 miles from their destination, when his wife Wealthy Eddy went into labor. Due to the birth of Mary Amanda that day, the Shumway family avoided a disaster, as we shall see.

Joseph Smith wrote on October 22nd, "I was informed that a mob had commenced hostilities on the borders of Caldwell County, adjoining Ray County (this must have been the Mud Creek settlement), and that they had taken some of our brethren prisoners, burned some houses, and committed depredations on the peaceful inhabitants." The next day he wrote that "(The Saints in outlying settlements) are gathering by flight and haste, leaving all their effects, and are glad to get off at that. The city of Far West is literally crowded, and the brethren are gathering from all quarters."⁴¹

One of these families was the Crismon family, whose story is remarkably similar to the experience of the Wilsons two months earlier. Martha wrote:

Being very wealthy, my father had lots of stock and valuables, and our home was one of peace until one night after prayers my mother's (18 year old sister Elizabeth Hill)⁴² ...who had joined the church with father, having the gift of tongues, told father to leave for Far West as soon as possible. Next morning he moved the family, then returned for some stock, and found that the mob had taken all and burned the house, leaving him only the wagon and team he had used in moving.⁴³

The Crismons did not return to their burned out home but remained in Far West. Martha wrote: "For a time, seven families lived in two log rooms while the mob surrounded the city and took the Prophet and leading men prisoners." Perhaps the other six families were also from Mud Creek.

On October 24th, the very day that the Crismons fled to Far West, the Young/Merrick group camped overnight on Shoal Creek in Livingston County at Whitney's Mill. They had been traveling off the main road, hoping to avoid trouble, but they learned too late that the mill belonged to hostile Missourians. The next morning, they crossed the mill pond on a flatboat and headed for Caldwell County, which was only 14 more miles, but they were confronted two miles out by 40 armed men led by Thomas O'Brien, who confiscated their arms and escorted them back to Whitney's Mill and

⁴⁰ Lyman Wight, another character to enter the story later, was born 1796 in New York and fought in the War of 1812. He was a Campbellite follower of Sidney Rigdon but joined the Mormons when converted by Oliver Cowdery during the early days of the church in November 1830. He served eleven missions, was an early member of the Jackson County Branch, experienced Zion's Camp, settled Daviess County near Adam-ondi-Ahman, built a ferry there, and headed the Danites. He was incarcerated with Joseph and Hyrum Smith at In Missouri and was ordained an apostle in Nauvoo in 1841 and served as Major General in the Nauvoo Legion.

⁴¹ History of the Church vol. III. p.166. October 24.

⁴² Martha erroneously described Elizabeth as a widow, having confused her with Polly Williams, the other sister-in-law who was living with them.

⁴³ Whitney p. 133: "Later in the year, when the persecution against the Saints was raging, he moved into that city (Far West) and remained there until the general expulsion."

forced them to remain three days,⁴⁴ while the mob decided whether to kill them or just steal their property.

While the Merrick group was under detention, the Battle of Crooked River broke out 40 miles away in Ray County about 16 miles south of Far West. The apostle David W. Patten and a group of about 60 volunteers had left Far West to rescue three Mormons, who had been arrested and were reportedly threatened with execution on Crooked River. They routed a Missouri militia company of 36 men in a surprise attack and drove them from the field. But David Patten, Patrick O' Bannon, and Gideon Carter were killed in the process, and two more were wounded. Captain Bogart's gentiles lost one killed and seven wounded. During the ensuing three days, the escapees in Bogart's company "burned every Mormon cabin they came upon (in northern Ray County) and wantonly shot down much livestock and destroyed other property. The outlying Mormon settlements had by this time been nearly all abandoned, the occupants having fled to Far West for safety."⁴⁵ These may be the men who destroyed Crismon's house.

Meanwhile when their captors got drunk, Merrick's group had an opportunity to escape on October 28th. They ferried across the mill pond in their nine wagons, lying to the wives of the mob that they were headed back to Illinois, but actually set out for Far West, probably not yet aware of the disturbance at Crooked River, nor of Governor Boggs' infamous extermination order which was issued that day. The next morning Knight's 13-year-old son died not far from Whitney's Mill, evidently of natural causes, and they stopped to bury him.

After resuming their trek the next morning, they were discovered by armed men across a ravine but managed to escape them and make it to the border of Caldwell County. Joseph Young wrote that they "gained residence of a friend in Jacob Meyer's settlement." This was probably Oliver Walker, the same man who had sheltered the main body of the Kirtland Camp on his property four weeks earlier.⁴⁶ Having lived among the Missourians for several years, Walker had been playing the role of peacemaker, meeting personally with the leaders of the gentile militia on the 25th, the day of the Crooked River battle. Walker's son-in-law, Mahlon Vail Johnson, age 35, escorted the travelers to the settlement at Hawn's Mill about five miles further up Shoal Creek, where they arrived on the 30th. About 30 Mormon families were already living in the immediate vicinity of Hawn's mill and blacksmith shop on Shoal Creek. Merrick's group intended to stay briefly to repair their wagons and then continue to Far West, but they had unknowingly walked right into the infamous massacre.

The militia of Livingston County, including those who had already been harassing Merrick's group, numbered about 240 men and included volunteers from surrounding counties. Sensing their own danger and knowing of the attacks on Merrick's party, 36 Mormon men in the vicinity including Elias Benner, the miller from the Mud Creek settlement, had met on the 28th to try to prevent a conflict. After their leaders David Evans and Oliver Walker had worked out a truce with the militia, there was a brief period without incident. But then at about four p.m. the gentiles suddenly rode into the community. David Evans ran towards them waving his hat and calling for peace while the women

⁴⁴ This is according to Joseph Young. In Nathan Knight's version, they were held captive for a week.

⁴⁵ History of Caldwell and Livingston Counties, Missouri, St. Louis National Historical Company, 1886, p. 134.

⁴⁶ Oliver Walker bought land along Shoal Creek August 16, 1836. They were in Missouri before December 1834. He owned 360 acres four miles ENE from Hawn's Mill and his son-in-law together owned about half section that contained Shoal Creek as it ran along the county line.

and children fled into the woods and the rest of the men headed to the blacksmith shop, hoping to find protection. Ignoring Evans, the mob charged. Virtually unarmed, the men and older boys were shot down through the spaces between the logs.

The attack lasted about a half hour and over 1,600 shots were fired. In total, 17 Mormons died and 15 more were wounded. Levi Merrick and his nine year old son Charles were killed. The mobbers found Levi's wallet and stole the \$700 from the sale of his farm. Warren Smith and his ten year old son Sardius were also killed, although Smith's 11 year old son Willard escaped. Nathan Knight was struck by several bullets but survived. Mahlon Johnson, who had escorted the group from Walker's farm, was fired upon in the attack, but not injured. His brother-in-law, John Walker was wounded in the arm. Elias Benner, who had built the sawmill on Mud Creek where Crismons settled, was killed. Benjamin Lewis, who owned land adjacent to Jacob Hawn was killed. His brother Tarleton Lewis was injured. Their brother, David Lewis, was one of only four men in the blacksmith shop to escape without injury.⁴⁷ Jacob Hawn, the mill owner, was wounded. At least three adult members of the Merrick party--David Deming, Amanda Smith, and Joseph Young--escaped injury. In addition to these characters in our story, eleven others died. Nine more were injured, and eleven escaped without physical injury. The emotional trauma and that of their women and children cannot be quantified.

The same day, a much larger army of militia men from Ray County including the survivors of Crooked River camped a half mile west of the town of Far West. James C. Snow's wife Eliza Ann delivered their first child that day while the army threatened.

Having received the so-called Extermination Order of Governor Boggs, which was precipitated by hysterical false reports that nearly all of Bogart's militia company had been killed at Crooked River, a force of 2,500 state militia men under Major General Samuel D. Lucas besieged the city of Far West, which held about 600 Mormon men under arms.

On October 31, 1838, seeing that their situation was hopeless, the Mormons surrendered. Their military leader, George M. Hinckle, rode out with a white flag and agreed 1) to give up church leaders to the militia, 2) to pay for all damages caused by Mormons during the previous three months, 3) that the Saints would leave the state, 4) that they would surrender their arms.

The Crismons, who had fled to Far West a week earlier, were huddled with six other families in a two room log cabin in Far West while the mob surrounded the city. Following the truce, the gentile militia entered the town, plundered, threatened, confiscated arms, and took prisoners. This is when they threatened Charles. Charles Crismon's affidavit⁴⁸ submitted to Joseph Smith on his losses in Missouri attests that on the last day of October or the first of November 1838 a little before sunset, several thousand armed men took him prisoner of war (in the incorporated limits of the City of Far West) and after many insults by the soldiers, freed him to "leave the state forthwith with his family, greatly to his damage and injury."

⁴⁷ The Lewis brothers and their children will re-enter our story later. Benjamin's nine year old son John later married Charles Crismon's oldest daughter Martha.

⁴⁸ On January 21, 1840, Charles notarized an affidavit in the circuit court of Scott County documenting his abusive handling in Far West, Caldwell County.

Of the event, Joseph Smith wrote: “About 80 men were taken prisoners, the remainder were ordered to leave the state, and were forbidden, under threat of being shot by the mob to assemble more than three at a place.”⁴⁹ The reason that Charles was not imprisoned is probably because he had not been part of the Danites, the Mormon militia. Among the prisoners who were not immediately released were several of the Wilson family of the Mud Creek settlement. Joseph Smith and many of the church leaders were arrested, threatened, and then incarcerated in other counties to wait for trial. The Mormons were given three months to leave Missouri.

Exactly when Charles and his family returned to Illinois is not clear. His house at the Mud Creek settlement was destroyed and the family could not last long in the crowded cabin they shared in Far West. His house and most of his belongings had been destroyed, so there was no reason to return to Mud Creek. He was a war refugee with a large family of females, but he still had his wagon and team. He apparently headed back “forthwith” to Illinois as he promised the mob. In addition to his wife and children, Charles returned with Polly Williams, the widow of his brother Peter, his wife’s unmarried 19-year-old sister Elizabeth Hill, and all of their children.

Most of the Mormons in Caldwell and Daviess Counties, lacking the supplies and means to leave and having no connection with nearby Illinois, waited until spring.⁵⁰ On December 24, 1838, Don Carlos Smith and his cousin George A. Smith, who had missed the violence and were returning from a mission, were given refuge at Tenney’s Grove on Mud Creek by Whitford G. Wilson.

Martha Crismon, wrote “In the winter we were driven out and went back to our old house in Illinois where we lived for two years.” This seems to contradict her earlier statement that Charles sold his property before moving to Missouri. In my previous writing on the Crismons, I opined that she was wrong⁵¹ on the basis of this contradiction, but now I believe that Martha and I were both wrong.

According to her pedigree,⁵² Martha’s sister Samantha was born March 27, 1840, in Geneva, which supports Martha’s contention, although there is no primary source for Samantha’s place of birth. It seems possible that Charles sold only *some* of his property and kept his house. My current theory is that the family moved back into their home, but only lived there about 18 months before moving away, as I will explain.

George Cristman had been irate when his son Charles joined the church in 1838, and the relationship between them was permanently severed, so it must have been uncomfortable for both of them when Charles and his family returned from Far West, and they lived for two years as neighbors again. But as the tenth of twelve children, Charles had plenty of family members around when he returned, although his brothers James and Henry had both stayed in Kentucky when the family first moved to Geneva.⁵³ Jehu Hill, the father of Polly Crismon and Elizabeth, was probably

⁴⁹ History of the Church, vol. III, p. 192.

⁵⁰ Charles’ former neighbor in Mud Creek, Bradley Wilson, moved to Nauvoo with his children after a brief stay in Quincy in 1839. He died there 1842, probably of a stroke, having become suddenly speechless while cutting logs.

⁵¹ See Historical Biography of Three Crismon Generations, in *FamilySearch* Memories, KGCB-N2B, p. 61.

⁵² *FamilySearch* KWJJ-LTY.

⁵³ Two older brothers, George and Jacob, lived about 12 miles away in Meredosia on the Illinois River, where they had built a mill. Their brother David, who was four years older than Charles, had moved eight years earlier to Industry Township in McDonough County, just east of Hancock County. Two more older brothers,

living in Carrollton, Greene County, 30 miles south of Geneva, with their stepmother Annis Kniffen,⁵⁴ their three year old daughter, and Elizabeth's twin sister Jane,⁵⁵ but they soon moved to Geneva as well. Another sister named Emily Hill, who was two years younger than Polly, also lived in Geneva. Emily had married Zachariah Harris⁵⁶ in Carlinville about 50 miles south of Geneva when their mother died there in 1834, but they moved to Geneva before 1835, where Zachariah was in the harness and grocery business. They had two children under four. They had not gone to Missouri because they were not Mormons.

And it seems probable that many of the Crismons' friends, the other Morgan County Mormons who left Far West, also moved back, for there is evidence of continued organized church activity in Geneva after the expulsion.



Polly and Charles Crismon

Charles and Polly had been in Geneva again for over a year when their third daughter Samantha was born two weeks after the town of Nauvoo was incorporated. Charles' sister-in-law Polly Williams married her missionary, Elijah Elmer in Geneva on April 29th.⁵⁷

The 1840 U.S. census was counted in Geneva in June, and all of the Christman families appear in it except Charles and his family, who do not appear in any county at all. I think that this is because they happened to be in transit at the time, moving to Industry Township in McDonough County to live with Charles' brother David.⁵⁸ Charles must have had a good reason to move there, since at Geneva the family was already settled near family members, were part of a church congregation, and lived on property that they owned. Perhaps it was the friction between Charles and his father. Maybe it was to be closer to Nauvoo, where the Prophet was by then urging his people to move. But most likely it was a business opportunity, since David had recently acquired additional property in Industry

John and Michael, lived in Geneva. Charles' youngest brother William was living temporarily near Waverly, about 25 miles to the east, but was back in Geneva in time for the 1840 census. His sister Barbara and her husband Stephen Bobbitt lived just a few miles west of Geneva with 12 unmarried children. Barbara's son James Granville Bobbit would soon marry Polly's visionary sister, Elizabeth Hill, who had returned with Charles and Polly from Missouri, but apparently left the church. Charles' other sister Catherine (Caty) and her husband Samuel Crane were living in Geneva but soon moved to Pike County.

⁵⁴ They were married in Morgan County in October 1835 but were in Carrollton in the 1840 Census.

⁵⁵ Jane later married twice, had ten children, and never moved from Morgan County.

⁵⁶ Zachariah was her first cousin. His mother, Jane Hill, was a sister to Emily's father Jehu Hill.

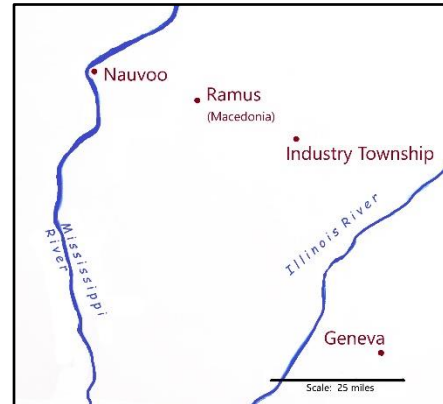
⁵⁷ Elmer's first wife, Polly Pierce, had died of quinsy in Greene County on October 10, 1839.

⁵⁸ David Chrisman was well known in the area as "a pro-slavery character." The county history relates that David once captured a runaway slave from an agent of the underground railway but was refused his reward from the ungrateful owner. History of McDonough County, pp. 274-275.

Township, which is about 60 miles north of Jacksonville, and 54 miles east of Nauvoo.⁵⁹

About the time that his family moved, Charles was called on a proselyting mission to Mississippi. Both of his missionary companions were still home at the time of the census, so the mission must have begun after June. Charles boated down the Mississippi River with Daniel Tyler⁶⁰ and Richard D. Sheldon.⁶¹ But soon after arriving in Mississippi, Charles decided to leave his two companions and went alone to Tennessee.

Many missionaries in those days began their work among family members, but I couldn't find any Crismon relatives in Tennessee. I am not sure that he even proselyted. Perhaps he traveled through Tennessee only to reach his old home of Hopkinsville, Kentucky, where his brothers Henry and James were still living. Charles returned home to Industry Township sometime before May 1841, since his sixth child Mary Ann was born nine months after that, and he took up milling on Grindstone Creek. Charles' friend Elijah Elmer and his sister-in-law Polly Williams moved from Greene County to Geneva about four weeks before their daughter Crucy was born in February, lived there until fall, went to Nauvoo for three weeks, and then settled in Ramus,⁶² again leaving Polly Williams' older children Permelia (16) and Catherine (13) with their grandparents, George and Elizabeth Chrisman, as in the move to Missouri in 1838.



⁵⁹ According to Bureau of Land Management records, David Crismon acquired 152.41 acres section 18 NW1/4 north of Grindstone Creek and 40 acres McDonough NE ¼ SE ¼ section 23 on Grindstone Creek on November 3, 1840.

⁶⁰ Daniel Tyler was ordained an elder by Harrison Burgess in Griggsville, Pike County (20 miles west of Geneva) sometime after Burgess' arrival in April 1839. Elder Tyler wrote that since he was still recovering from his trials in Missouri, he began a local mission in neighboring Scott County, Illinois on a part time basis due to ill health. Scott County was created a year earlier out of part of Morgan County and included Geneva, so he probably already knew Charles. Tyler had been baptized in 1833 at the age of 17 in Pennsylvania, his family having been taught by Hyrum Smith. He married in 1836, saw the Kirtland Temple dedication, and immigrated to Far West in September 1836 with nine people in one wagon. In Far West, he was one of ten men called by Joseph Smith on September 9, 1838, to intercept a shipment of guns about 30 miles north of Richland intended for the Daviess County Militia. On April 10, 1843, Daniel Tyler was called on another mission. This time with James Hutchins to Natchez, Mississippi. On September 24, 1844, Tyler was appointed to preside over the southern district of Missouri. He served in the Mormon Battalion and wrote the definitive book on it. In 1853 was sent to the European Mission, opening Germany and Switzerland to proselyting and returning home in the Martin Willey Handcart Company.

⁶¹ Richard D. Sheldon was born 1806 in Canada. After his mission he married Lodima Neff in Morgan County on March 2, 1845. Richard and Lodema had children in Iowa in 1846 and 1848, and in California in 1852. He must have died sometime before 1855 when Lodema remarried in Los Angeles.

⁶² The name of the settlement was originally known as the Perkins Settlement, but after some of the Perkins family joined the church and a number of Mormons moved there, it was organized as the Crooked Creek Branch on April 17, 1839. Then when it was made a stake by Hyrum Smith on July 9, 1840, its name was changed to Ramus from the Latin word meaning "branch." It was renamed Macedonia in March 1843 when it was incorporated as a town.



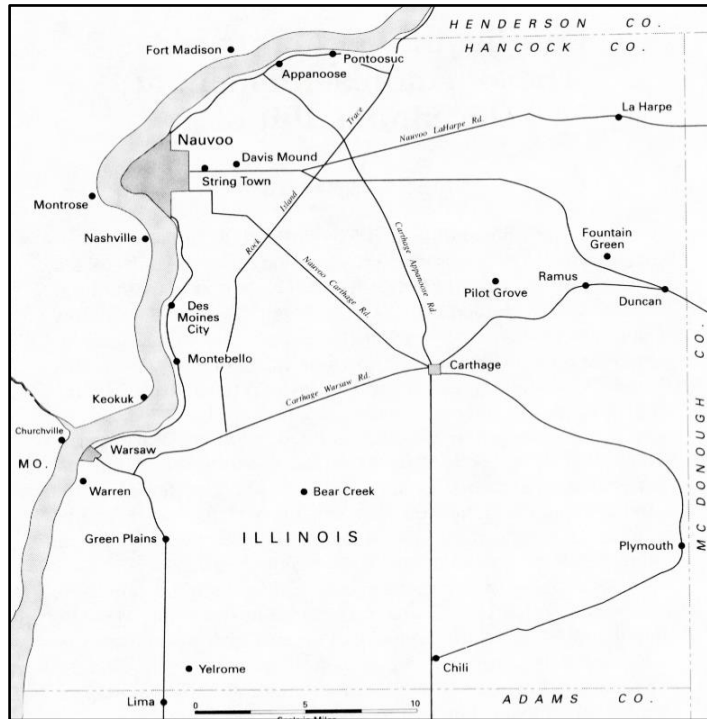
Emily Hill

Zachariah Harris, the 37 year old husband of Polly's sister Emily, died in Geneva in September 1841 of consumption. When Emily's seven month old daughter Mary Elizabeth died a month later, she and her remaining children moved to Industry Township to live with Charles and Polly Crismon.

In the fall of 1841, Charles visited Nauvoo to be baptized by proxy for Peter, his deceased brother.⁶³ Mary Ann Crismon was born February 11, 1842, in Industry Township.

Joseph Smith asked Charles to build a mill closer to

Nauvoo, so by June the Crismons moved about 25 miles west to Ramus in Hancock County, where the Elmers were living. There he built another mill and ran a carding machine. Ramus was a community of about 600 people situated 25 miles east of Nauvoo and about 10 miles the other side of Carthage. Emily moved with them and set up a loom in Polly's kitchen for income to support herself. Charles made frequent visits to Nauvoo, and one day he persuaded Emily to attend a conference there. According to her biography, it was more out of curiosity than interest that she attended that conference, but her feelings softened at the first sight of the Prophet Joseph Smith when she heard him preach. Emily was baptized in Ramus that winter by Andrew Perkins.⁶⁴ Until then she had been bitterly opposed to the Mormons, ashamed that her sisters had joined.



There is a story in several of Charles Crismon's biographies, which if true, happened around this time. Here is an amalgam of the five renditions of the story:

⁶³ Joseph Smith first revealed the practice of vicarious baptism for the dead in a funeral service for Seymour Brunson on August 15, 1840. Saints began baptizing each other in the Mississippi river from that day on. (Jane Neyman statement, given Nov. 29, 1854, in Journal History.) The prophet revealed the principle in General Conference in Nauvoo October 2, 1841. The first baptisms for the dead in the uncompleted Nauvoo Temple were performed Sunday, November 21, 1841. (History of the Church, 4:454). The wooden font and oxen were replaced by stone in August 1845.

⁶⁴ Andrew Perkins and his family were founders of Perkins Settlement in 1831, which later grew into Ramus and Macedonia. He was an early convert to Mormonism there and later served as a counselor in the bishopric in 1845.

Joseph Smith sought refuge in the Crismon home several times. On one occasion, Charles hid the Prophet in a load of driftwood to smuggle him across the Mississippi River. When he was stopped at the river's edge by members of a mob, he was questioned at length. He asked for a "chaw of tobacco" and remarked that it was very cold and asked if they had something with which he could warm himself. They were so surprised that they didn't bother to search the boat and the Prophet was delivered to safety.

The story may be apocryphal. Since it comes in multiple variations, it is at best inaccurate, since the stories don't agree on several details. Ramus was 25 miles from Nauvoo and 20 miles from the Mississippi River. It is hard to imagine that Charles would be collecting or transporting driftwood that far from home. Joseph's life is documented in his daily journal during that period, and it is hard to find room for the story, but here is what we know.

Although Joseph had many brushes with mobs and with the law, after he escaped from Missouri and founded Nauvoo, he enjoyed a relatively peaceful period. But this changed after the assassination attempt on Governor Lilburn Boggs on May 6, 1842, for which Orrin Porter Rockwell was blamed for doing it under orders of Joseph Smith. On July 12, 1842, George Miller and Erastus Derby⁶⁵ left for Quincy, Illinois and Jefferson City, Missouri to meet with Illinois governor Thomas Carlin and Missouri governor Thomas Reynolds concerning attempts to extradite Joseph Smith from Nauvoo to Missouri for trial.

On August 8th, 1842, having received extradition papers from Missouri, a deputy sheriff from Adams County (the next county south of Hancock) and two assistants arrested Rockwell and Joseph Smith in Nauvoo in connection with the assassination attempt. Joseph was soon released on a writ of habeas corpus by the Nauvoo city court. The sheriff returned the next day, believing the writ had been illegal, but did not find Joseph, who wrote, "The deputy sheriff returned to Nauvoo, but I was absent, and he did not see me." He spent the next day at his Uncle John Smith's in Zarahemla.⁶⁶ Joseph was obviously keeping a low profile, since on the following day a secret meeting was held on an island in the Mississippi River between Nauvoo and Zarahemla with Emma and six of Joseph's friends including George Miller and Newell K. Whitney.⁶⁷ After the meeting, the Prophet and his aide-de-camp and bodyguard, Erastus Derby, were rowed by Brother Dunham⁶⁸ upstream in a skiff to hide at Edward Sayers' farm.⁶⁹ Joseph hid there until August 18th, moved for a day to Carlos

⁶⁵ Erastus Derby held the rank of Aide de Camp in the Nauvoo Legion, which basically meant that he was a personal assistant to Joseph Smith in his position as head of the Nauvoo Legion. Among his assignments were to serve as a scribe while Joseph was in hiding. He served as clerk on the steamboat Maid of Iowa and as Official Inspector of the Legion and performed any needed personal duties for Joseph Smith.

⁶⁶ Joseph did not record who rowed him across the Mississippi that day. Most likely it was Erastus Derby. This is the only river crossing of Joseph that I know of when he did not name the rower. It could have been Charles, but that would stretch the essentials of his family story.

⁶⁷ These are two more names to remember, who figure in our story.

⁶⁸ Jonatham Dunham was a Colonel in the Nauvoo Legion. He had helped to organize the Kirtland Camp, had defiantly broken his sword before surrendering it to the victorious army that besieged Far West. He had volunteered to scout among the Pottawattamies on the Missouri River in February 1843 to plan the exodus to the Rocky Mountains. He was later one of the men who crossed the river on June 19, 1844 with Joseph Smith to escape the mob who killed him at Carthage jail.

⁶⁹ Sayers was a 40 year old horticulturist from England with a wife and no children, who had bought 10 woodland acres bordering the Mississippi 2 ½ miles northeast of the temple block.

Granger's in Nauvoo for a day, and then went home. In his journal, he named fifteen men who helped him during his time in hiding that month, but Charles Crismon's name was not among them, nor did Joseph go anywhere near Ramus during that time.

That August while in hiding from the deputies, Joseph Smith prophesied that the Saints would be driven to the Rocky Mountains and that the Saints would "live to go and assist in making settlements and build cities and see the Saints become a mighty people in the midst of the Rocky Mountains."⁷⁰ That was an early sign of his vision of a home for the Saints in the West, which will inform the rest of this story.

Joseph Smith went into hiding twice more that fall but remained far from Ramus. On September 3, 1842, deputy sheriff Pitman from Carthage and two other men searched the Nauvoo House, but Joseph escaped unseen out the rear door. It was rumored that the deputies dined together that evening at Amos Davis' house⁷¹ with 15 men, and that one of them came back to search the Smith house again. Joseph was back in hiding, having fled first to Newell Whitney's farm outside Nauvoo. After dark Erastus Derby took the prophet to Edward Hunter's house. But within three days Joseph felt safe enough to be back in his office writing letters.

On October 2nd it was learned that a Quincy newspaper had claimed that Governor Reynolds of Missouri issued a \$300 reward each for Joseph Smith and Orrin Porter Rockwell, so Joseph went into hiding again, this time fleeing with John Taylor and two other companions to the house of Taylor's parents in Oquawka about 43 miles north of Nauvoo, where he stayed until the 28th except for a brief visit to Emma.

At no time during those months when Joseph went intermittently into hiding can I find a logical opportunity for Charles Crismon to have aided him in a manner consistent with the driftwood story. However, it is likely that while living in Ramus, Charles had many opportunities to interact in other ways with the prophet during the following 20 months until his martyrdom.

Sometime in 1843, 12-year-old Martha was baptized by Charles' former missionary companion, Daniel Tyler, who was by then living in Bear Creek Township, about 24 miles from Ramus. At that time Ramus was the second largest congregation of Mormons and was often visited by Joseph Smith, whose sister Sophronia McClary lived there. Sections 130 and 131 of the Doctrine and Covenants were received as revelations at Ramus (which had recently been renamed Macedonia) about six weeks apart around April 1843. It was not a single revelation, but based on William Claytons notes from several different talks given there by Joseph. Julia, a daughter of Elijah and Mary Polly Elmer was born in Ramus that month.

At about that time Emily Hill Harris and her two children left the Crismon household and moved to Nauvoo.

In June 1843, law enforcement authorities went after Joseph Smith again while he and Emma were visiting Emma's sister Elizabeth Wasson in Dixon, Illinois, 200 miles north of Nauvoo. Two officers from Jackson County, Missouri and Carthage arrested him there, but as they were conducting him

⁷⁰ History of the Church vol. 5, p. 85.

⁷¹ Davis arrived in Commerce around the fall of 1836, where he was the postmaster and a tavern keeper before the Mormons arrived and renamed it Nauvoo. He joined the church in 1840.

to Missouri, a posse of 175 Mormon men came to the rescue and escorted him and the two hapless officers to Nauvoo. There he was freed, and the two lawmen stormed off to Carthage demanding that Governor Ford send the militia, but he demurred, fearing a civil war.

Meanwhile, Joseph was exploring various options for moving west in accord with his revelation the previous year that the Saints would settle in the Rocky Mountains. In July, Jonathan Dunham was appointed with a native guide to visit the Pottawattamie Indians. He made a 600 mile round trip, scouting through what is now Iowa for a prospective trail and resting places for the westward movement.

On September 24, 1843 John Smith, the prophet's uncle, was chosen as the presiding elder over the Macedonia Branch, (formerly Ramus) and the new leader suggested a rebaptism for the members. Sixty-six names appear in the minutes of those baptized, and Charles was first on the list which also included his wife Mary (Polly) and their daughter Martha Jane, who was 12. Elijah and Mary Elmer and Mary's nine year old daughter Elizabeth, Charles' niece,⁷² were also listed.

Joseph Smith gave Charles a blessing in Nauvoo on January 26, 1844. Charles had received one a year or so earlier that promised him "opportunities beyond his greatest imagination."⁷³ That same day, Charles' old friend Elijah Elmer received a patriarchal blessing given by John Smith in Macedonia. On February 10th, Charles was mentioned in the minutes of the Macedonia Branch as an "acting counsellor" in a high council trial of Joseph Jackson.

On February 20th Joseph Smith drew the Twelve Apostles into his dream of a place to make the Saints a mighty people, as he noted in his journal:⁷⁴

I instructed the Twelve Apostles to send out a delegation and investigate the locations of California and Oregon, and hunt out a good location where we can remove to after the temple is completed, and where we can build a city in a day, and have a government of our own, get up into the mountains, where the devil cannot dig us out, and live in a healthful climate, where we can live as old as we have a mind to.

Within a day, four had volunteered, and by their next meeting three days later there were 19 more volunteers. Among them were Jonathan Dunham, Alphonzo and Phineas Young, and James Emmett.⁷⁵ Joseph said, "Perhaps it would be best to go direct to Santa Fe. Send twenty-five men: let them preach the gospel wherever they go." But these efforts were cut short when on March first, Joseph Smith announced his candidacy for President of the United States.

⁷² Mary was the daughter of Peter Crismon, who had been killed by the millstone.

⁷³ This second blessing is not mentioned in Joseph Smith's journal for that date, but that entry is brief.

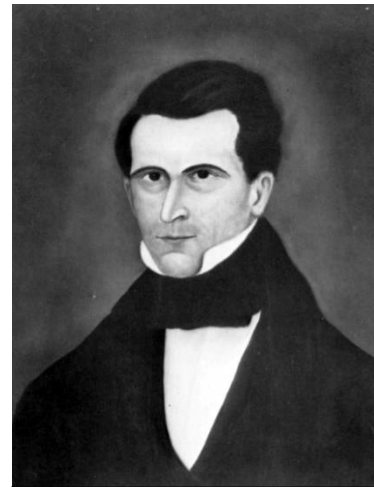
⁷⁴ History of the Church, vol. VI, p. 222.

⁷⁵ James Emmett was a long time church member who was born in Kentucky in 1803, had been an early settler in Missouri, and had some experience in speaking Indian languages. He had been appointed to the Nauvoo police force two months earlier and had been on missions to Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Ohio. The following month he was added to the Council of Fifty.

A week later, Bishop George Miller⁷⁶ arrived from the Pinery in Wisconsin with a letter from himself, Lyman Wight, Phineas R. Bird, Pierce Hawley, and John Young advocating an expedition to Texas as a possible place to establish the church. A committee of the Twelve and Council of Fifty considered the proposal on March 11th.

As a part of his candidacy for President, Joseph Smith sent a memorial to Congress on March 26th that would empower him to raise a company of 100,000 armed volunteers to secure protection for American settlers of the Texas and the Oregon Territories. And on March 30 a similar proposal was sent to Present John Tyler. This plan was probably influenced by Miller and Wight's proposal. In his memoir⁷⁷ Miller wrote:

The plan was if Joseph Smith did not prevail, (the church) would send a minister to the Republic of Texas to make a treaty with them for all the country north of a west line from the falls of the Colorado River to the Nueces...and get them to acknowledge us as a nation and help defend them against Mexico, stand in as a go-between the belligerent powers (U.S. and Mexico). We would send the Black River Lumber Company to take possession of the newly acquired territory. Lucian Woodworth was chosen minister to Texas, and I was to return to the pineries to bring down Lyman Wight.



Bishop George Miller

At General Conference in April, a call was made for volunteers to electioneer for Joseph Smith to be the next President of the United States. Hundreds of elders volunteered, and the Quorum of the Twelve scheduled public political conferences in each state.

Around the end of April, Lyman Wight, George Miller, and their families arrived in Nauvoo from the pineries in Wisconsin. Woodworth returned soon thereafter from Texas, and the Council met to hear his report. Miller wrote,

⁷⁶ George Miller was born in 1794 in Virginia and when he was young he actually worked as a carpenter for Thomas Jefferson before moving to Illinois in 1831. He lived near Quincy and sheltered Mormons fleeing Missouri in 1839, allowing the Smith family to shelter on his property, including Joseph and Hyrum when they escaped from Liberty jail. Shortly thereafter, Miller was baptized by John Taylor that year and moved to Commerce. In August 1840, in company with John A. Mikesell, Miller was assigned to scout 90 miles up the Des Moines River in the summer of 1840 on assignment from Joseph Smith to find a suitable place 'for establishing and building up a stake or branch of the church. He was a mason and a Brigadier General in the Nauvoo Legion. He was a mill operator, lumber dealer, and steamboat owner. He was bishop of the "Upper Ward" in 1841. After a brief local mission, he was called to be a bishop over the construction of the Nauvoo House. He served a mission to the Wisconsin pineries on the Black River from 1842 to 1843 to procure lumber for the Nauvoo House and the temple. He was named "Second Bishop" under Newell K. Whitney and was one of the original members of the Council Fifty on March 11, 1844, although still absent. After Joseph Smith's death, Miller was reluctant to accept Brigham Young as the leader of the church, and sometimes clashed with Brigham.

⁷⁷ Dr. H. W. Mills, DeTal Palo Tal Astilla, p. 107, JSTOR.

It was altogether as we could wish it. On the part of the church there were commissioners appointed to meet the Texan Congress to sanction or ratify the said treaty, partly entered into by our minister and the Texan cabinet. A Mr. Brown, Lucian Woodworth and myself were the commissioners appointed to meet the Texas Congress, and, upon the consummation of the treaty, Wight and myself were to locate the Black River Lumber Company on the newly acquired territory and do such other things as might be necessary in the premises, and report to the Council of the Kingdom.

But plans to explore the west were put off for a time. That month Joseph Smith had to hide twice from officers trying to arrest him at his house after a grand jury in Carthage issued indictments against him for perjury and polygamy.⁷⁸

The Reform Party, a third-party ticket, officially nominated Joseph Smith for president at a state convention in Nauvoo, Illinois on May 17, 1844.

Joseph Smith faced his accusers on Sunday, May 26 before the congregation, and on Monday he left for Carthage accompanied by two dozen brethren to investigate the grand jury indictment.

On the 10th of June Joseph Smith, acting as mayor, ordered the city marshal, John P. Greene, to destroy the anti-Mormon newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*. Two days later Francis Higbee entered a complaint before a justice of the peace in Carthage, who issued another arrest warrant for Joseph Smith and 17 others. Constable David Bettisworth arrested the Prophet and his accomplices for rioting and for suppressing the press. They were ordered to be released at once by the Nauvoo court, but the constable promised to return.

This prompted a mass protest meeting in Carthage the next day. On June 13th at a countywide meeting held in there, it was resolved to drive all the Saints in the outlying settlements into Nauvoo.⁷⁹

During this chaotic time, Charles and Polly's seventh child, Charles Crismon, Jr., was born ten miles from Carthage in Macedonia on June 14th.

Charles had been chosen first lieutenant in the First Company of the Nauvoo Legion in Macedonia.⁸⁰ The day after Charles Jr.'s birth, Lieutenant Crismon and all able bodied men in Macedonia were ordered to hasten to Nauvoo to defend Nauvoo. According to Benjamin F.

⁷⁸ Charges of defamation had been brought against him by William Law in the Carthage court.

⁷⁹ Conflict in the Countryside: The Mormon Settlement at Macedonia, Illinois, Susan Sessions Rugh, *BYU Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 1/2, pp. 149-174.

⁸⁰ The Nauvoo Legion was very top heavy in officers, and lieutenant was actually the lowest officer rank—there were three lieutenants in each company under a captain. The companies in 1843 averaged 60 men. *JSTOR*: May 7, 1842, there were 26 companies and 2,000 troops. By 1843 there were 29 infantry companies. The Legion, which was sanctioned by the state of Illinois, served as the police force in Nauvoo including a night watch. By act of Congress in 1792 all free white males throughout the country between the ages of 18 and 45 years were obligated to enroll in the militia and provide himself with a good musket, fuzee (flintlock) or rifle. The company officers wore a sword, and the field officers had a sword and a pair of pistols. Company officers were elected by their enrolled enlisted men and general officers by their commissioned subordinates. An annual muster was required for each regiment in September and for each battalion and company in April in addition to "drill musters." (Hamilton Gardner, *the Nauvoo Legion, 1840-1845—A Unique Military Organization*, *JSTOR*.) In Nauvoo, a scale of fines was enacted for nonattendance.

Johnson,⁸¹ a member of the Macedonia militia, “to avoid attack we traveled all night across the prairie through mud rain and darkness, terrible to those who were there.” Because of the heavy rains, they had to make their way across twenty miles of prairie “half a leg deep in water.” They miraculously passed through an attack by a mob five miles out of Macedonia as they passed near Carthage. “The company from Macedonia...marched past them within rifle shot, while the mob fired several guns at them, the balls whizzing past their ears. After they arrived, Joseph (Smith) directed the Legion’s quartermaster to issue shoes to those who had walked barefoot.”

Charles heard Joseph Smith speak for an hour and a half on June 18th to the entire gathered legion in full military dress. They numbered about 3,200 men. Martial law was declared, and the troops marched down Main Street in Nauvoo.

Five days later Governor Ford’s troops entered Nauvoo to arrest Joseph Smith, but he had fled across the river into Montrose.⁸² Joseph learned the next morning that the governor had threatened to hunt him down but would guarantee him a safe trial if he surrendered himself. When he was told that his followers in Nauvoo thought he had deserted them, Joseph agreed to return “as a lamb to the slaughter,” predicting his own death. He surrendered June 25th and was famously martyred with his brother Hyrum two days later in Carthage.

During the crisis Emily Hill sent her two children from Nauvoo for safety to live with her in-laws in Carrollton and returned to live with the Crismons in Macedonia.⁸³

There was a succession crisis in the church that summer. Hyrum had been the expected successor since he was “Assistant President,” but he died with Joseph. Their younger brother Samuel also died unexpectedly and somewhat mysteriously⁸⁴ on July 30th, just a month after his brothers. The last surviving brother, William Smith, at that time claimed only the right to succeed Hyrum as presiding patriarch. Other contenders to replace Joseph were Sidney Rigdon, basing his claim on his status as the only remaining member of the First Presidency, and James Strang, a fairly recent charismatic convert, who claimed that Joseph Smith had appointed him to succeed him and that angels had appeared and confirmed it at the time of Joseph’s death.

Brigham Young assumed leadership of the church on behalf of Quorum of the Twelve at a conference meeting on August 4, 1844, where he was reported by many to have taken on the

⁸¹ Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life’s Review*, Zion’s Printing and Publishing Co., Independence, MO., p. 101.

⁸² Was this a chance for Charles to transport Joseph? Probably not. From Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling*, p. 546: He and Hyrum and Willard Richards bailed the leaky boat with their boots while Porter Rockwell rowed.

⁸³ Another family story has her going with her children to Carrollton, where she lived a year and tried unsuccessfully to convert her in-laws to Mormonism. She later returned to Nauvoo and married Abraham O. Smoot as a polygamous wife.

⁸⁴ Samuel Smith’s official cause of death was “bilious fever”, which is an archaic and inexact term for any disease accompanied by a fever and the evacuation of bile, such as typhoid fever or malaria. Lucy Mack Smith suggested Smith had become ill because of the fatigue and shock occasioning by his experience of the death of his brothers. Smith’s brother, William, believed that Smith was poisoned by Hosea Stout on orders from Brigham Young and Willard Richards. Hosea Stout was suspected in part because, as reported by Smith’s wife, Stout had been administering a white powder to Smith daily as treatment for his illness. (Anderson, Lavina Fielding (2001), *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir*, Salt Lake City: Signature Books., p. 750 & n.122.)

appearance of Joseph Smith as he spoke. A majority of those present had voted in his favor over Sidney Rigdon. Brigham appointed the two bishops, Newell K. Whitney and George Miller to succeed Joseph Smith as trustees over the church's temporal affairs.

Miller's business partner and apostle, Lyman Wight, who had been on a presidential mission to the eastern states and returned to Nauvoo with the rest of the Twelve, resisted the idea of Brigham Young taking over leadership of the church. Wight felt that Joseph Smith had agreed to adopt his plan to create a safe haven for the church in the Republic of Texas and had returned to his congregation in Wisconsin to prepare them for that endeavor. After his arrival in Nauvoo, Wight said, "I would not turn my hand over to be one of the Twelve; the day was, when there was somebody to control me, but that day is past."⁸⁵ Neither did Miller fully support Brigham Young's claims, but he accepted his calling as a bishop.



Lyman Wight

James Emmett still wished to act on his offer to Joseph Smith the previous February to convert Indians and investigate possible destinations for the Mormons in the west. Fearing opposition from Brigham Young, he secretly organized an expedition during the summer, recruiting Zachariah Wilson, James Holt, John L. Butler, and others in the Bear Creek Settlement 20 miles south of Nauvoo to head west into the wilderness. On September 4th, skirting Nauvoo, Emmett's company crossed the Mississippi and made their way by wagon and flatboat to Ft. Madison and Burlington, and then up the Iowa River about 150 miles to Marshall County in Indian Territory, where they set up quarters for the winter. There he proclaimed himself Joseph Smith's successor and organized a system of common ownership of all property.

In general conference that October, Brigham Young was sustained as president of the Quorum of the Twelve to lead the church. Lucy Mack Smith spoke at the conference and said she hoped her children would accompany the Saints west. She would go if they did. Two days later Charles Crismon was named as one of 85 high priests called by Brigham Young to go abroad and settle in the congressional districts in the U.S. to preside over the branches until the temple was built.⁸⁶

Brigham Young had been aware of the Emmett company's departure, and in February 1845 he sent the Apostle Amasa Lyman to visit the settlement, hoping to bring them back into the fold. Lyman found them near starvation, and many were dissatisfied with Emmett. One of Emmett's followers, Zachariah Wilson, broke with Emmett and made his way back with about 30 other dissenters. In the spring Emmett's group moved further west to the Missouri River, where they settled at Fort Vermillion, a trading post on the tributary Vermillion River, a tributary of the Missouri.

That spring another breakaway group, Lyman Wight's 130 followers, left their settlement in Wisconsin on log barges on March 25, 1845, landing at Davenport, Iowa where they worked long enough to secure teams and wagons for their overland trip to Texas. Brigham Young and five of the

⁸⁵ Davis Bitton, *Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies*, 1977.

⁸⁶ *History of the Church*, Vol. VII., p, 306. The destinations were not named, and it is not clear whether Charles ever left.

brethren wrote to them on April 17th inviting them to rejoin the Saints in Nauvoo, but Wight led his followers on a 1,500 mile journey on May 12th. They arrived at Ft. Johnson on November 19th and created a colony called Zodiac a short distance from the present site of Austin.⁸⁷

An interesting newspaper article that mentioned Charles Crismon appeared on June 21, 1845, in Alton, Illinois, a town across the Mississippi River from St. Louis about 60 miles south of Geneva.

More Mormon Outrages. One day last week, the iron on a portion of the railroad between Jacksonville and Meredosia was stripped from the rails and stolen. The Governor immediately issued handbills offering a reward of two hundred and fifty dollars for the detection and conviction of the perpetrators. Mr. Hunt, the jailor at Jacksonville, had, however, previously started in pursuit of the thief. He succeeded in finding him beyond Carthage in Hancock County with his wagon standing before his door, loaded with a portion of the iron that had been stripped from the railroad. The person implicated is Charles Chrisman (sic), a Mormon Elder, and formerly a resident of Morgan County. He had taken altogether three loads, weighing in the aggregate about 4,500 pounds. Chrisman sold it to a blacksmith in his neighborhood at four cents per pound. He was brought back to Morgan County, where the theft was committed, and safely lodged in jail for trial, which was expected (to) take place sometime this week. Chrisman is of a respectable family and is said to be a man of property. He deserves to be punished to the very extent of the law.⁸⁸

The alleged crime occurred about 50 miles south of Industry Township where Charles had lived, and his brother David was currently living. The modern railroad from Jackson to Meredosia runs right between the farms in Geneva that Charles and David had bought two decades earlier. I wonder if the railroad easement ran right through their farms, and they figured that they had a right to salvage the iron. It would not have been hard for the sheriff to figure out who did the deed.

No doubt their father George Chrisman knew of this whole episode. Another article published two weeks later mentioned that bills of indictment were issued against Charles and David as well as a neighbor of theirs named Dunagan in Macoupin County. I have no information on Charles' location between July and December of 1845, so it is possible that he served additional jail time if he was not acquitted.

Meanwhile, the Mormons in and around Hancock County were experiencing mounting violence. For example, the Saints at Camp Creek about 16 miles east of Nauvoo were requested by the leaders at Nauvoo to move to the city, as plans had been learned of a pending attack on that settlement by mobbers. Then on July 10th, while harvesting wheat, eight Camp Creek men were surrounded by a mob, severely whipped and robbed of two or three guns.

That summer James Emmett left his group at Ft. Vermillion in Indian Territory to travel to Nauvoo and ask for forgiveness and reinstatement in the church. Brigham Young granted both but sent him back with two trusted supervisors to prepare the group to join them in the planned exodus in 1846. William Clayton wrote:

⁸⁷ Wight later recognized Joseph's brother William Smith as president of the church and died in 1858 in Texas. Most of his followers eventually became members of the RLDS.

⁸⁸ *Alton Telegraph & Democratic Review*, Vol. 10, No. 25, Saturday, June 21, 1845.

It was decided to send John S. Fullmer and Henry G. Sherwood with James Emmett to his company to council and instruct them. A letter was written to Emmett's company stating that Sherwood and Fullmer were sent by the church to council them, the brethren left them to appoint whomsoever they thought best to preside over them. It was thought best for them to tarry where they were until spring and then join the Nauvoo Mormons moving west.⁸⁹

Meanwhile, plans for emigration were being made in Nauvoo. William Clayton wrote on August 28, 1845, "Met with Dr. Richards.... It was voted to select three thousand men who are able to bear arms to prepare this winter to start to California next spring with their families." Three days later he wrote, "The subject of the Oregon expedition was again talked over and the Twelve seem to think it important that they should go with the company to select a location and plant the standard. They would leave their families here and return when they had succeeded in finding a place." On September 9th President Young selected the members of the Council of Fifty who would start west next spring.

But spring was not soon enough for the local gentiles. A large meeting of friendly non-Mormons was held at Quincy on September 22nd. Delegates from nine counties—which did not include Hancock—deliberated and adopted resolutions advocating Mormon departure and contacted the Quorum of Twelve Apostles. After the Twelve responded, the representatives of the nine-county meeting held a second gathering at Carthage on October first at which they accepted the Mormon proposal to leave Illinois in the spring and recommended that the belligerent non-Mormons should acquiesce as well. They also called for a multi-county military organization—which never materialized—to keep peace in Hancock County until the Mormons left.

From mid-September to mid-October, Mormons in the towns of Lima and the Morley settlement, which lay between Nauvoo and Quincy on the Adams/Hancock County line, were attacked, and a Mormon named Edmund Durfee was shot and killed. Seventy houses in the two towns were burned, and around 100 barns and outbuildings were destroyed. Forty-five men were named by the Mormons as participants, but none were ever brought to justice. About 1,000 Mormons in 180 families lived there including some of Joseph Smith's plural wives.

Having learned of the burning of Yelrome,⁹⁰ the residents of Macedonia prepared to defend themselves. They activated their company of the Nauvoo Legion and posted a guard at night. It was reported on the 15th that a mob was meeting in McDonough County, "all very hard against our people" according to Thomas McCallister, a British convert living in Macedonia.

The church leaders hastened their efforts to move west. On September 9, 1845, the Council of Fifty resolved that 1,500 men be selected to go to the Salt Lake Valley.⁹¹ A general exodus was not considered at the time, but rather a select group of leaders to lead the way.

Meanwhile, the Saints in outlying communities needed rescuing. All Mormon men owning a team were called to go to Yelrome to help Solomon Hancock remove the sick, women and children,

⁸⁹ An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton, p. 268.

⁹⁰ Yelrome is Morley spelled backwards.

⁹¹ History of the Church p. 439.

goods, and grain to Nauvoo. Within two days, 134 teams were sent from Nauvoo to remove Saints from surrounding counties.

Sheriff Backenstos,⁹² who was considered partial toward the Mormons, was driven from his house in Carthage on September 15th. Orrin Porter Rockwell rescued him by killing his pursuer.

The work of preparing for emigration continued. On September 30th Samuel Bent, Alpheus Cutler, and Reynolds Cahoon presented their lists of families selected by them to go west. They had each gotten their company nearly drawn up of one hundred families. President Young appointed Shadrach Roundy, Joseph Fielding, Cornelius P. Lott, Peter Haws and Daniel Spencer each to select and organize a company. Parley P. Pratt calculated a recommended outfit for five persons: one wagon, three yoke cattle, two cows, two beefs, three sheep, 1,000 pounds flour, 20 lbs. sugar, one rifle plus ammunition, a tent, and tent poles. Estimated cost \$250. (assuming the family took their own bed, bedding, clothing, and cooking utensils.) It was decided that all of the Twelve and their families would go west.

Henry Sherwood and Stephen Markham returned from their visit with Emmett's settlement, reporting satisfaction with their mission and bearing information concerning routes to the west.

By October Conference, mobbing action had diminished, and Brigham Young instructed some of the brethren to return to the Camp Creek settlement to secure the crops and bring them to Nauvoo, but the mobbing resumed and only part of the crops could be salvaged. Brigham Young told the governor's representatives, who had been sent to keep the peace, that the Mormons planned to leave Nauvoo and settle in the west. Such a resolution was adopted unanimously in General Conference on October 6th, but acts of arson continued.⁹³

The October General Conference was held in the nearly completed temple.⁹⁴ George A. Smith spoke responding to people who worried about the looming exodus, explaining that leaders of the advance companies were appointed, but the rest of the people need not be in a hurry, for the Twelve would take care to have proper captains for them appointed in due time. The plan was to have two groups of emigrants. The Twelve and a group of strong, single men would go first as pioneers.⁹⁵ All the single men who wanted to come in the Company of the Twelve were notified to give their names. The rest of the Saints would follow later. After conference the exodus was formally announced in an epistle to all members of the church.

During the first week of November, the emigration company of the Twelve met in the temple. Parley P. Pratt and Amasa Lyman were appointed captains over the first and second hundreds. Two weeks

⁹² Jacob B. Backenstos lived in Carthage 1842-45. He served in the state legislature in 1844, was sheriff in 1845 until forced to leave Carthage for assisting the Mormons. He joined the Mexican War in 1846 as an officer, was wounded, and then served in Oregon before resigning from the military. He committed suicide in the Willamette River near Portland, Oregon in 1857.

⁹³ Jorgensen: the Morley Settlement in Illinois 1839-1846., The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal, vol. 32, No. 2 pp. 149-170.

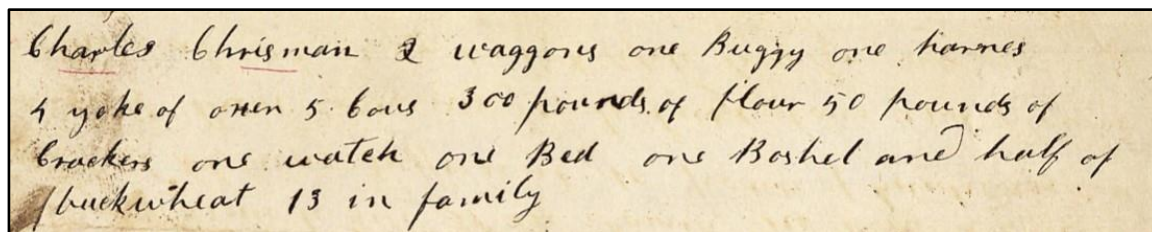
⁹⁴ The attic story was completed and dedicated at the end of November, and then on December 10th, temple endowments began for small groups. They continued steadily including in the evenings and on Saturdays, until by the first week of February 1846 more than five thousand six hundred endowments were performed.

⁹⁵ Nowadays, we refer to all of the emigrants to the west as pioneers, but to them, the word "pioneers" implied young, athletic men who paved the way for others.

later Brigham met with all the captains. He wrote: "Families organized: 3,285. Wagons on hand, 1,508. Wagons commenced 1,892" and noted that every hundred had established one or more wagon shops, involving nearly every shop in town.⁹⁶

I don't know how long it took Charles to get out of the Jacksonville jail, but he did not have much time to spend at his home in Macedonia. He had been appointed to be the captain of Bishop George Miller's advanced company of pioneers, the "strong, single men" mentioned by George A. Smith to pave the way for the first company of Brigham Young and the Twelve, and Charles moved his family to Nauvoo in December 1845.⁹⁷

Getting value for his property must have been a problem, and Charles had plenty of it. He had a house, a mill, and a carding operation to dispose of, and the market would be flooded with properties left behind by the Mormons that year, which led to extremely low prices. He soon departed across Iowa with two wagons filled with provisions, a buggy with a horse to pull it, four yoke of oxen, and five cows. According to an inventory taken about a month into the trip he traveled with thirteen family members. That is a bit of a puzzle. We know that he took Polly, his 32 year old wife, Martha 15, George 13, Esther Ann 10, Samantha six, Mary Ann four, and Charles Jr. aged 2½. Polly was eight months pregnant. That only makes eight people. Their only other family members in the church were Elijah and Mary Polly Elmer and Abraham and Emily Almira Smoot, and they did not get off until April. My theory is that the other five family members were "pioneers," young men recruited to work for Charles.⁹⁸



Charles Chrisman 2 wagons one Buggy one harness
4 yoke of oxen 5 cows 300 pounds of flour 50 pounds of
crackers one watch one Bed one Boshel and half of
buckwheat 13 in family

On the last day of 1846, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball examined maps together, looking at locations for the Saints to settle west of the Rocky Mountains and reading various works written by travelers in those regions such as John Fremont.

⁹⁶ History of the Church, vol. VII, p. 532.

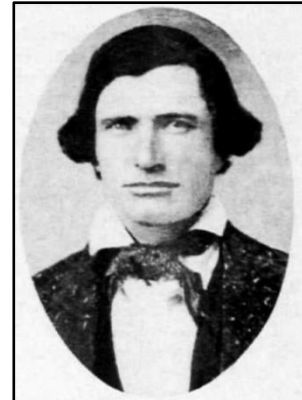
⁹⁷ Despite threats from the surrounding communities, Macedonia was not evacuated until spring, most of the members traveling west in a single company and founding a settlement called Macedonia Camp about 20 miles east of Kanessville in Pottawattamie, Iowa Territory. They named their branch the Living Spring Branch, which existed until 1850. (Church History Library LR 11808 21.)

⁹⁸ The only existing roster of Charles' company was made during their week-long stop in March at the Chariton River Camp, when the companies were re-organized. This is where his family was given as 13. In his "Ten" were five young unmarried men who may have camped with Crismons: John Ritter, *FamilySearch* memories K2HZ-N52, Thurston Larson KWV9-VFJ, Lars Larson KWJN-9TY, Henry Green Boyle KWJ8-JM1, and William Squires G7MZ-JDB, four of whom left the company in July to join the Mormon Battalion.

Charles and Polly Crismon received their endowments in the unfinished temple on January 6th. The Council of Fifty met in the temple on January 11th arranging to make their early start and met there again with the captains of companies on January 18th.⁹⁹ Charles and Polly were sealed in marriage on January 20th.

In the blur of preparations to exit Nauvoo it is easy to overlook three other groups besides the Emmett colony, who were also preparing to set out for the west that winter. Since they will enter our story, let me introduce them to you now.

John Brown¹⁰⁰ and his brother-in-law William Crosby, after receiving their endowments, departed immediately for Monroe County, Mississippi, where Brown had previously converted an entire congregation of Mormons. Brigham Young had instructed them to take the Monroe County families who were ready to go west that winter to Independence, Missouri and from there on the Oregon trail into Indian country and fall in for the last leg with Brigham Young's party at Ft. Laramie. The two men arrived in Monroe County on February 22nd.



John Brown

A group of Mormons in the New York area was preparing at this time to go west by sea aboard the ship *Brooklyn*. On February 1, 1846, a reprint of New York City newspaper article by Sam Brannan appeared in the *Millennial Star* in Nauvoo advertising the departure of the *Brooklyn*. The ship was to sail January 24th (the word came a little too late for Nauvoo people to sign up.)¹⁰¹ Saints began

⁹⁹ It was on this day that Emily Hill became the second wife of Abraham O. Smoot.

¹⁰⁰ John Brown was born in Tennessee in 1820 but moved with his family to Southern Illinois when he was nine. His father died when John was 17, so he returned to Tennessee where he attended school, joined the Baptist church, and became a teacher. While there he met a Mormon missionary, was baptized, and moved to Nauvoo in time for October Conference 1841, about when Charles Crismon was baptized for his dead brother. John was called on a brief local mission in Illinois, and then to Mississippi in 1843, where he spent most of his time in Monroe County, baptizing 60. He witnessed another 60 baptisms and became president of the branch there of "123 members of good standing." Among these were Elizabeth Crosby, whom he later married, and members of her family. Two years later was called back to Nauvoo with six other young men to defend Nauvoo and help to build the temple in March 1845, leaving his young wife home. He later returned to visit his mother in southern Illinois and bring his pregnant wife back to Nauvoo, where their first child died August 4, 1845, after living only an hour. He finished building his house just in time to leave the Nauvoo in February after the couple received their endowments.

¹⁰¹ On November 8, 1845 Orson Pratt gave an oration to a large gathering at American Hall, which was covered in the newspapers, exhorting the eastern Latter-day Saints to "flee Babylon, by land or sea." Shortly afterward, newspaperman Samuel Brannan, under the orders of Brigham Young, chartered for \$1,200 dollars a month a weather worn merchantman freighter named the *Brooklyn*, which had been re-fitted with staterooms, meeting rooms and inner decks so low that taller passengers had to duck their heads to walk, to carry 238 passengers, their belongings and the supplies required to begin a new life, along with a printing press owned by Brannan plus 800 lbs. of paying freight ordered for the Sandwich Islands around the horn of South America to Northern California.

gathering in mid-January 1846, lodging in New York City boardinghouses. They came from all the surrounding states.¹⁰²

A third group was the Mormons living in St. Louis, Missouri, a large collection of Saints from various places. The city had long served as a temporary home (and sometimes not so temporary) for Saints arriving from Europe and the east coast of the United States who had come up the Mississippi from New Orleans but were prevented by lack of means or travel conditions to get to Nauvoo. Others had fled down the Missouri River during their eviction from Jackson County in 1835 or from Caldwell and Daviess Counties in the winter of 1839. During the persecutions in Nauvoo in 1844-45, more Mormons fled down the Mississippi to the Mormon community in St. Louis, which actually sent back financial relief to Nauvoo for those who were driven from their homes.¹⁰³

A circular was sent from the High Council in Nauvoo on January 20th explaining that their plan was to send a company of pioneers in March consisting mostly of young, hardy men plus a few families to the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains for a resting place until place for permanent location could be determined. This was a shock to many rank and file members of the church who were planning to move in the spring, and they were feeling abandoned. William Clayton wrote on January 23rd:

It is...rumored that many are dissatisfied because the Twelve and some others are going West without taking the whole church. This is a matter of impossibility, and the Saints have no cause for complaint...it is necessary that some men should go beforehand to prepare a place for the rest and the Twelve and some others have to go to save their lives, for there are plans laid for their destruction.¹⁰⁴

Then it became clear that the pace of departure of the Twelve needed to be drastically moved up, when rumors were heard that the officers of the church were to be arrested. On February 2nd, the Twelve and a few others met in council and agreed to start as soon as possible. Brigham Young instructed them to have boats ready to ferry them across the Mississippi River on four hours' notice and to have their captains of Hundreds and Fifties meet that very evening at Father Cutler's. Brigham Young addressed the Saints in the grove. The company going west would start this very week.

Most history books claim that the first wagon to leave Nauvoo that winter for the west was Charles Shumway on February 4th. He was traveling with at least one young pioneer, Abraham Boswell, and both were in George Miller's party under Captain Crismon's charge. Bishop Miller and his family crossed on the sixth, and the Crismon family crossed the Mississippi and drove to the encampment on Sugar Creek on February 7th, where they connected with Miller. Martha wrote: "We traveled to

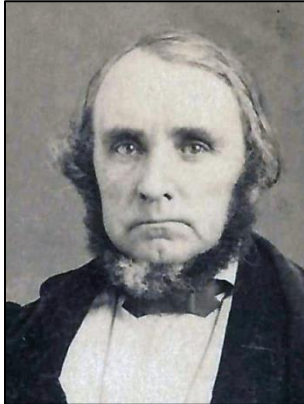
¹⁰² They arrived July 31, 1846, nearly a year before Brigham Young's first wagon company reached Salt Lake Valley. Charles and Polly's daughter Esther Ann Crismon would eventually marry one of the *Brooklyn* passengers, George Edward Serrine.

¹⁰³ In 1854 St. Louis became the 16th Stake of Zion and one of only two outside Utah, with Erastus Snow the stake president. In 1857 a cholera epidemic closed the ports and the stake disbanded when most of the leaders moved west. For a time, Brigham Young had designated St. Louis the trailhead for overland pioneers. Ref: Fred E. Woods and Thomas L. Farmer, *When the Saints Came Marching In: A History of the Latter-day Saints in St. Louis, Orem, Utah*: Millennial Press, 2009.

¹⁰⁴ Clayton Diary p. 288.

Missouri with the company, father building bridges and making roads all the way and were at Sarpee (sic) Station when the Mormon Battalion was mustered.” Another family to join the Miller Company was George and Ann Boyes with their sons 22 year old William and 19 year old Thomas, able workers, and their three young children.¹⁰⁵

The stake president Father John Smith, who was Joseph Smith’s uncle, crossed with his clerk, Albert Carrington.



William Clayton

William Clayton, the church historian, was assigned to manage the supplies and equipment for the organization as a whole, which consumed his life with loading and packing. The next day he sent four loads of goods over the Mississippi. He also sent two teams across on February 14th, the day that George A. Smith and his family crossed. But cold, snowy weather slowed the party of church leaders. The next day when Willard Richards and his family crossed the river with his buggy lashed behind his wagon, he reported snow three or four inches deep. Brigham was on the west bank with about 50 loaded wagons and carriages, having crossed with his large family that day. They arrived together at Sugar Creek camp at about 8 p.m., and Brigham Young addressed the company the next day. Some of those present had been camping there for two weeks, waiting for Bishop Whitney, Heber C. Kimball, and William Clayton, who were still trying to secure property

needed in the camp.

Then, while wagon after wagon continued to cross the Mississippi, Charles Crismon and George Miller set out ahead from the camp with sixteen wagons and 30-40 pioneers on February 24th. The temperature that day was minus 12 degrees when Charles C. Rich drove over the river on ice at Montrose. There was so much wind that no one could cross the river for the next two days.

Clayton did not arrive until February 27th. He had been delayed while putting together public items such as millstones, saws, guns, etc. He wrote:

We spent the past week waiting to cross over the river. It has been hard frost and much snow. I crossed with my family, rested the teams, and soon after went on to the camp. Bishop Whitney concluded to stay at the river until morning because some of his teams could not get over. When we got to the camp we were received with joy and formed in the company of the band.

The next day the companies of Daniel Spencer, Charles Shumway (who had by then been camped at Sugar Creek for over three weeks) and part of Captain Bent’s company moved four miles. The rest of Sugar Creek camp broke up on March 1st.

The camp had swelled to many more emigrants than Brigham Young had planned for, and compared to the carefully planned outfits of the Twelve, many of the uninvited travelers were

¹⁰⁵ It is likely that Boyes family and Shurtleff did not join the Miller/Crismon party until the reorganization at Chariton River Camp.

woefully underprepared, stretching the community resources such as tents and freight wagons, and lacking sufficient supplies for themselves. He wrote:

Company consisted of nearly 400 wagons, all very heavily loaded with not over half the teams needed to make a rapid journey. Most had provisions for several months. A considerable number, despite counsel, had started in destitute condition.

Some others only had provisions for a few days, even though Brigham Young had sent Bishop Miller and Charles C. Rich off to buy additional supplies.¹⁰⁶ Brigham made room for all of them but was not happy about it and was ultimately forced to leave many of them behind at camps along the way. The journals of William Clayton and Willard Richards reflect Brigham Young's problems in keeping the group on the same page. The uninvited pioneers dragged the elite party down, while Miller and Crismon kept getting too far ahead in Brigham's view. Richards complained on March 5th, "Bishop Miller and his company did not stop as was anticipated, failing to get work at this pace, and went on 12 miles further." But Miller returned and called on Brigham during the night, having found a good camping place.

Richards complained again: "Bishop Miller, P. P. Pratt, Shumway and their companies are supposed to be together on Chariton Bottom, about 45 miles ahead. They were 50 miles ahead on the 18th." On March 21st a messenger informed Bishop Miller's camp to move on to Shoal Creek. Then on March 23rd Clayton wrote: "We found that George Miller's company had gone still farther about eight miles instead of waiting till we overtook them so that we could organize. I wrote a letter to them saying if they did not wait or return to organize, the camp would organize without (them) and they be disfellowshipped."

In frustration, Brigham ordered the whole camp to stop about 80 miles out of Nauvoo for nine days at a place they called Chariton River Camp to allow the slower wagons to catch up. That morning Clayton wrote another letter to Parley and Orson Pratt and George Miller again telling them they must come back to organize. "(They) came into camp and at one o'clock the council met. The brethren pled that the charges in the letters were unjust. They had not (tried) to keep out of the way but had done all for the best."¹⁰⁷

The 400 wagons (about 2,000 people) in "The Camp of Israel" was reorganized that day into six new groups of Fifty in three Hundreds, and the rest of the people were told to camp along the way and come with the later companies. The first Hundred was headed by Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, the second Hundred was Parley P. Pratt and Peter Haws, and the third was John Taylor and George Miller. Miller was president of the second Fifty and Charles Crismon was the captain, so the Miller group was redefined as the second Fifty of the third Hundred, somewhat confusingly also known as the Sixth Fifty (of the new camp). Samuel Gulley was appointed as his commissary person.¹⁰⁸

While Brigham was struggling to keep his own group together, he was also trying to coordinate with the Emmett group at Fort Vermillion. He sent James Butler and James Willard Cummings to notify

¹⁰⁶ Miller had bought 215 bushels of corn and Rich bought 350 on February 22nd.

¹⁰⁷ Clayton Diary p. 375.

¹⁰⁸ Samuel Gulley was one of Daniel Tyler's baptisms in Mississippi. Later, in the winter of 1844, Gulley himself had served a mission in Mississippi.

the Emmett Company to proceed to Fort Laramie, where they would join the advanced pioneer company which would follow later along the Platte River. The two emissaries left the next day via Shoal Creek for Fort Vermillion. They carried a long letter from Brigham updating Emmett on the developments at Nauvoo.¹⁰⁹

Brigham had planned to meet John Brown's group of Mississippi Saints from Monroe County at Fort Laramie as well. But things did not go as planned for Brigham Young's group as we shall see. The Emmett group learned of the changes in time to meet the Saints earlier at the Bluffs of the Missouri River, but the Mississippi Saints never got the message.

As instructed by Brigham Young, by May 8th John Brown had fitted out a company of fourteen families in Monroe County, Mississippi with teams and started for Fort Laramie to meet Brigham Young's company. They traveled through Missouri to Independence, where three other families from southern Illinois joined the company. By taking the Oregon Trail to the Platte River and then following it, they arrived at Fort Laramie in July, where they expected to meet the Saints from Nauvoo. However, they found no one there but soldiers, a few mountaineers, and trappers. On advice from one of the trappers, the Mississippi Saints turned south and settled at Pueblo on the Arkansas River at the foot of the Rocky Mountains for the winter.

On April 12th President Young called a council meeting at Heber C. Kimball's camp to present a plan. They would go to the headwaters of the Grand River, enclose a space of land about two miles square, and put up 20 log houses. Those in the camp who were not chosen for the new three companies (basically those who had not brought sufficient supplies to make the trip to the mountains) would remain there to build a resting place for the companies planning to leave Nauvoo in the spring. This was to become the settlement of Garden Grove, where they would arrive in twelve more days.

William Clayton had learned the previous night that his wife Diantha, whom he had left behind in Nauvoo, had borne a son on the 30th of March and was very sick with ague and mumps. He sang and played with the band until midnight and drank health to his son whom he named William Adriel Benoni Clayton. The next morning, he composed his famous hymn, "All is Well,"¹¹⁰ and asked Brigham to allow him to send for his family. Brigham said he would send for Diantha when they got to Grand River.

The main party arrived at Garden Grove on April 24, 1846. The plan to leave the slower members at Garden Grove renewed Brigham Young's hopes to reach the Salt Lake Valley by summer. Willard Richards wrote that President Young suggested sending a company of young men directly over the mountains and another part of the camp west of the Missouri River to put in crops. The rest of the camp would go 40 miles west of Garden Grove to make another settlement, soon known as Mount Pisgah.

Couriers were bringing questions from Elder Hyde in Nauvoo. In response Clayton wrote,

¹⁰⁹ The Forgotten Pioneers by Gerald E. Jones in Emmet's memories LZT6-LJP. Exact reference: Elden J. Watson, Manuscript History of Brigham Young 1801.1844 (Salt Lake City: p. 111, 1968.

¹¹⁰ This became the classic Mormon hymn, Come, Come Ye Saints.

Council voted to sell the Temple, reasoning that it would be more likely to be preserved.... I was ordered to write an answer to Elder Hyde's letter which I did at some length, saying finally that if the temple was sold, \$25,000 must be sent for the benefit of this camp. The balance to be left at the disposal of Elder Hyde, Wilford Woodruff, and the trustees and be appropriated to help away those who have labored hard to build the temple and the faithful poor of the Saints.¹¹¹

Shortly after their arrival at Garden Grove, some Missourians who had been trading with the Pottawattamie Indians came into camp. John D. Lee, who at one point served with George Miller's company, knew one of the traders, a man named Allen Miller.¹¹² After Brigham appointed Lee a "contracting commissary," Lee unloaded 17 wagons except for articles they could spare for trading and went with his drivers and the two traders to their home in Cooper Township, Gentry County, Missouri on the Greenwell Ford on the Grand River, where Allen Miller had a trading post to trade for needed supplies.¹¹³ In his journal, Lee did not name his companions, but it is possible that Charles Crismon went with him.

By mid-May the now leaner Camp of Israel, having left the slower Saints behind at Garden Grove, established Mt. Pisgah as another stopover settlement. Characteristically, George Miller's company was pushing ahead as usual. The irritated William Clayton wrote, "but he did not leave any cattle although he has plenty and many cows."¹¹⁴ This agrees with his course, for from about two months before we left Nauvoo to the present, he has done nothing but for himself."

Meanwhile, nearly three months after the Camp of Israel had left Nauvoo, the temple was dedicated on May 1, 1846. The ceremony was attended by about 10,000 people including the two presiding apostles: Orson Hyde, who gave the dedicatory prayer, and Wilford Woodruff. It is estimated that 1,350 individuals left Nauvoo within a week. On May 22nd, the Bloomington Herald

¹¹¹ Clayton Journal, p. 382.

¹¹² Allen Miller had married John D. Lee's fifth wife, Delethea Morris, whom Lee had married a year previously in Nauvoo.

¹¹³ The settlement was about 50 miles south of Garden Grove and only about 25 miles northwest of Adam-ondi-Ahman. Lee wrote that after he miraculously healed one of Miller's partners, Patrick Dorsey, the whole community was interested in hearing him preach. Lee preached a couple of times, netting \$15 in donations and an invitation to stay and build a church in the settlement. Dorsey had actually led a company of militia from Carroll County against the Mormons in 1838, but now sold all that he had except a buggy and pair of horses to take him and his wife to Nauvoo to occupy the property there that Lee traded to him at 25% of its value in exchange for 12 yoke of oxen, 25 cows and other stock, three wagons and about \$800 worth of food, tools, and other supplies for Garden Grove. Lee returned after a week with Dorsey and the 17 wagons plus three more that he had gotten from Dorsey full to overflowing with supplies.

¹¹⁴ Most of the resources of the Miller group were listed with Bishop Miller's family. As presiding bishop, he was steward over community property, but Clayton's response suggests that he felt that Miller was hoarding resources. They included seven wagons, 14 yoke of oxen, two young steers, seven cows, another yoke of oxen and wagon belonging to Andrew Perkins (a member of his group). He was hauling the company's gunpowder, an old kit and saddle, 300 pounds of flour, eight bushels of fall wheat, 2½ bushels of buckwheat, a peck of rye, flax seed, clover seed, timothy seed, a great variety of garden seed, a bushel of beans, a sack of parch meal, three sets of harnesses to sell, clothing and bed clothing sufficient for his 31 people (but no beds), ten pieces of hardware castings for sale to buy cows and flour for the outfit, and three or four whipple trees for sale. Of the 31 people in his "family," only 12 were related to him: two wives, two married sons, four children and an infant grandson. As with Charles Crismon, the rest were probably young laborers.

noted that ferries near Nauvoo were running day and night, crossing the Mississippi River 35 times in one 24-hour period. About 7,000 to 8,000 emigrants were camped on the hills and prairie across the river from Nauvoo. This group included the remaining church leaders, the builders who finished the temple, and many more who had just needed more time to prepare, and they eventually totaled about 12,000 people. William Clayton got word from Nauvoo that at the temple dedication, Elder Hyde had recommended that all the Saints move over the river as fast as possible.

Thanks to the work of the first group and the vastly improved weather, many of the second group of emigrants caught up with the Camp of Israel before it reached the Missouri River, some before it even left Garden Grove.¹¹⁵

Richards wrote in Pisgah on May 23rd that many teams had arrived from Nauvoo, 190 miles away. If they had stayed for the temple dedication, they would have managed over ten miles per day. That day John D. Lee returned from his trading trip.

While still in Mt. Pisgah, on May 30th the Quorum of Twelve rode carriages and horseback about three miles north of the village on the prairie, formed a square with two tents, dressed in their priests' garments, and knelt in prayer in a temple ritual complete with signs and anointing. The next day was Sunday, and General Conference was held in the camp at Mt. Pisgah.

Joseph Holbrook, Anson Call, Ranson Shepherd, Dwight Harding, and others who will soon join our story, soon arrived. They had crossed the Mississippi River May 18th on the ferry and reached Pisgah on June 13th. When David Lewis and 14 others including his brothers Beason and Neriah reached Pisgah, they volunteered either to stay or go on according to the will of the Twelve. The three Lewis brothers had 23 people with seven wagons and 11 yokes of oxen. They were instructed two days later to go on.¹¹⁶

On June 1st the first Fifty began to move across the Grand River leaving Pisgah, but they were held up there on June 10th waiting for Miller and Charles Crismon to build a wooden bridge. Others from the camp were making a road, which was completed about six p.m. On June 11th a report was received from a messenger in Emmett's company, who were instructed to come at once to Ferry Point¹¹⁷ on the Missouri River, where Brigham Young's company arrived by the end of the next day.

¹¹⁵ Most reached Brigham Young's company by July, although between 2,000 and 3,000 lagged behind, halting temporarily in towns in southeastern Iowa or northern Missouri. Some went down the Mississippi to St. Louis. Lacking food, funds, good wagons, teams, or decent health, many sought housing and jobs, and did not reach the Latter-day Saints' camps at the Missouri River for months or even years.

¹¹⁶ Church History Library MS 14290.

¹¹⁷ Traders Point, also known as Point-Aux-Poules, was a prosperous trading post near the Missouri River run by Peter (Pierre) Sarpy, the son of Gregoire Sarpy, a prosperous wholesale seed dealer in St. Louis. Peter had managed the American Fur Company's trading post fifteen miles away across the Missouri River at Bellevue, Nebraska since 1824. From there he established a ferry across the Missouri and opened up his store and fur operation on the Iowa side among the Pottawattamie Indians.

Soon they created an encampment on higher ground a few miles north of Sarpy's station up Mosquito Creek. Miller and Crismon had arrived a day before the main party and had already conferred with Sarpy regarding, among other matters, how to ferry the pioneers across the river.

Sarpy had a ferry, but it would be inadequate, and the Mormons needed to build their own. Over the next several weeks many other wagon trains joined them, forming the Grand Encampment on Mosquito Creek. Lorenzo Hatch, a member of Charles Crismon's company wrote:

We arrived at the Bluffs...after which we found that there weren't provisions enough to last the company a great while. Accordingly, I was dispatched for more corn. We had a pleasant trip. We went with the Captain of the Fifty. (This could have been Charles Crismon, but it seems more likely to me that this is when John D. Lee took his second trading trip.) I took a cargo of traps...feather beds, fine counterpanes, quilts, and such goods and went down to Missouri with a large number of wagons to obtain a cargo of supplies, and beef cattle and cows.¹¹⁸



Peter Sarpy

They most likely went to Old Ft. Kearny, about 38 miles south of Sarpy's trading post, but possibly all the way to St. Joseph at Robidoux's trading post, which was about 140 miles.

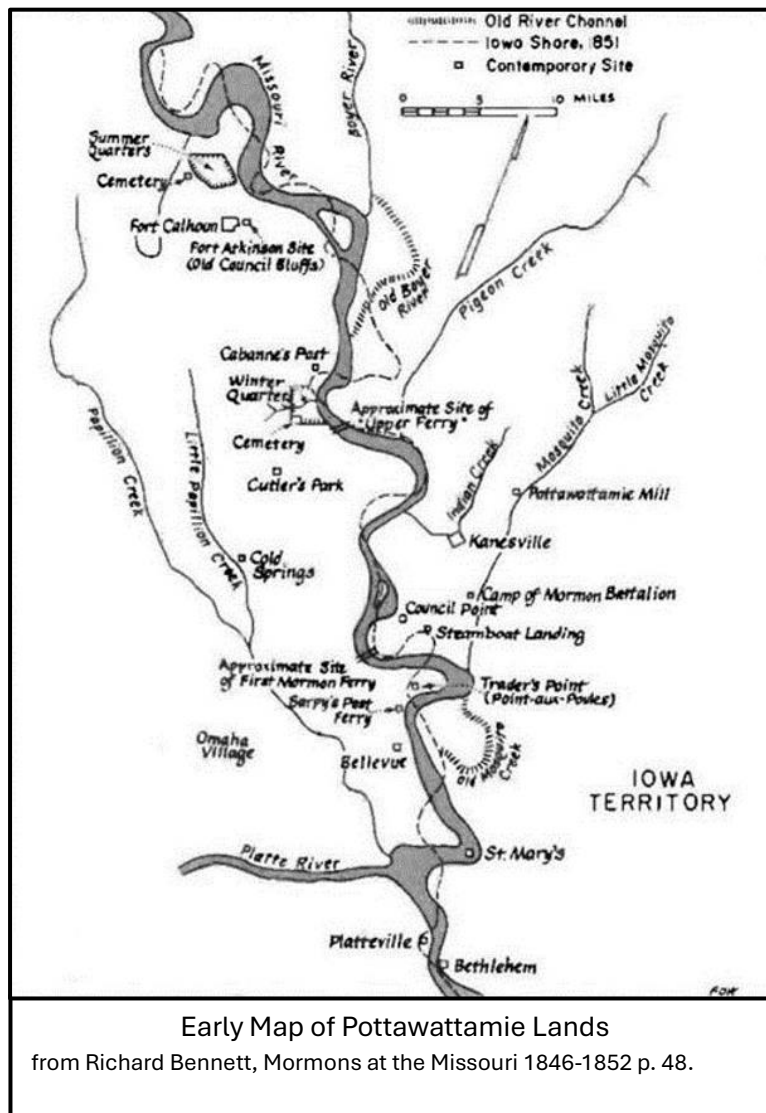
President Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Parley P. Pratt arrived on the banks of the Missouri River with their respective companies on June 14th. Miller's company camped among them.

On June 19th, Mr. Sarpy came into the camp and met with President Young, the apostles, and Bishop Miller. According to Willard Richards' diary, they had a long conversation about the road, country, climate and about the Rocky Mountains.¹¹⁹ Sarpy made a business proposition, offering \$1,000 plus 15 or 20 barrels of provisions and a horse in exchange for having about 90,000 lbs. of pelts brought to him from the head of Grand Island, and Bishop Miller promptly volunteered for the job. The council wrote to John L. Butler and the remnant of Emmet's company, who were by then

¹¹⁸ Lorenzo Hill Hatch Journal, Copied by Ruth Savage Hilton, *FamilySearch* Catalogue, p. 9.

¹¹⁹ In Richards' journal, the words "Great Basin Valley" were crossed out by the proofreading Brigham Young and replaced with "Rocky Mountains." He was evidently keeping his options open.

camping in waiting at Keg Creek about 25 miles away, to come to Ferry Point at once to go after the furs with Miller's company.



Willard Richards wrote on June 20th:

The brethren and their families left the camp at Mosquito Creek in carriages for the Trading Post and Indian agency where they visited with the agent, Major Robert B. Mitchell,¹²⁰ and met two Indian chiefs. After a few tunes, the presidency, ladies, and band dined with Major Mitchell, twelve at a table, at six tables. Then music and dancing and songs by Brother Kay

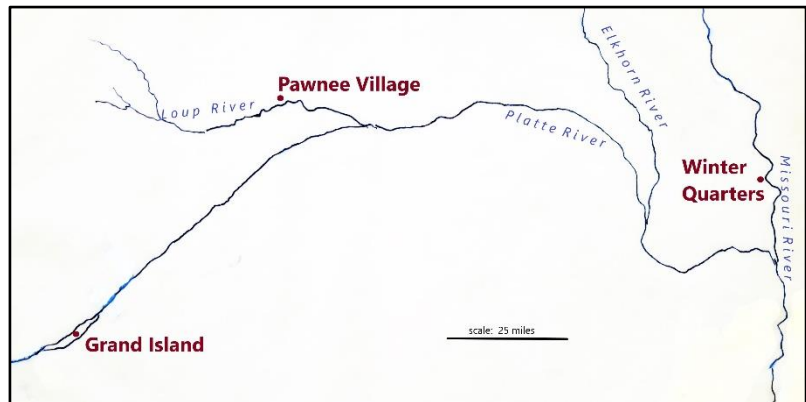
¹²⁰ Robert B. Mitchell, an attorney from Ohio, was serving as a sub-agent for the Potawatomi agency. Soon afterwards he volunteered in the Mexican War in the 2nd Ohio Volunteers, served as mayor of his home in Mount Gilead, Ohio, was injured in the Civil War while serving as a General, and finally as governor of New Mexico Territory in 1866.

until about six pm when the party started for home. The best of feelings were manifested by the citizens and Indians toward the Saints. Many teams arrived in camp.

Brigham received word that 64 families of Mormons in St. Louis were awaiting teams to take them to join the Saints, with 82 others hoping to follow later.¹²¹

Sunday meeting was held on June 21st in a small grove on a branch of Mosquito Creek. The apostles and Bishop Miller spoke. Eight volunteers including four carpenters were assigned to build ferry boats. Sixty teams were called for to go with Bishop Miller after Sarpy's pelts to start on Thursday, June 25th.¹²²

At this point, Brigham Young's plan was for most of the Saints to settle at Grand Island on the Platte River as a stopping point for their trip to the mountains that summer. John C. Fremont had recommended Grand Island in his book as the best point for a military position.¹²³ However, Mitchell, the Council Bluffs Indian agent, disagreed, feeling the Pawnees would not like it.



As it turned out, Mitchell was correct.

On June 27th a group of fleeing protestant missionaries appeared at Bellevue, just across the Missouri River on Indian land, and reported having been attacked by Sioux Indians about four weeks earlier. They were asking for help returning the mission's abandoned belongings. The Sioux had sacked a Pawnee village and attacked their nearby Presbyterian mission on Plumb Creek and the Loup Fork of the Platte River.¹²⁴

George Miller wrote in his memoir:¹²⁵

¹²¹ Conrey Bryson, *Winter Quarters*, Deseret Book, 1996.

¹²² They actually left with 52 teams, and they didn't leave until July 9th. And they never went to Grand Island to pick up Sarpy's pelts. From William C. Staines in Whitney's *History of Utah*: "Mr. Tarpee (Sarpy) pledged himself to forfeit several wagonloads of corn if anything should occur to break the contract. Something did occur, for about three o'clock the next afternoon, just as the wagons were ready to start, Mr. Tarpee came and informed the Bishop (Miller) that a messenger had arrived from his traders, stating that heavy rains had fallen and that they were bringing their robes and furs by water and had no use for teams. He then told the Bishop to send his wagons to the trading post and he would pay the forfeit. The Bishop protested that under the circumstances he had no claim, but Tarpee insisted, and the wagons were sent and returned loaded with corn."

¹²³ John Charles Fremont, *The Expeditions of John Charles Fremont Travels from 1838-1834*, 1:182.

¹²⁴ This is about eight miles southwest of the modern town of Genoa, Nebraska.

¹²⁵ Dr. H. W. Mills, *DeTal Palo Tal Astilla*, p. 107, JSTOR.

About this time the Sioux Indians attacked the Pawnee Loup Indian Village, and burned and sacked it, the Pawnees being on their summer hunt, and no one being at the village but the missionaries, farmers, etc. They took alarm and sent a dispatch to the Bluffs for teams to bring them and their effects down to the Bluffs. I made a bargain with them to haul them and their effects down to the Bluffs...and forthwith started (the distance being 120 miles) with 32 wagons and the families thereto belonging, intending to unload the wagons and camp out, and let the teams return with the missionaries to the Bluffs.¹²⁶

Miller and Crismon's advanced company had already been ordered to establish a temporary settlement at Grand Island on the Platte, which is 140 miles west of the Missouri River. This new opportunity would help to finance that effort.

On June 28th Charles Crismon came up from the trading post and informed Brigham Young that U.S. officers had arrived to enlist the Mormons to go and take Santa Fe, and if they did not enlist, should consider them as enemies and treat them accordingly.¹²⁷ The same day Thomas S. Williams arrived from Mt. Pisgah with 11 letters and reported that the "artillery" was within 15 miles, referring to Captain Allen's group. One of the letters was from Father Morley, who had heard that the U.S. officers were on their way from Garden Grove to enlist soldiers for Santa Fe. Another was from Wilford Woodruff warning that the U.S. officers had arrived at Mt. Pisgah and suggested that the Saints conceal their cannons and artillery.

The brethren met with John Scott¹²⁸ in counsel at the post office. President Young commanded all the Twelve to be at the river tomorrow and cross as quick as possible and got word to Bishop Miller to help Col. Scott over the river that night with the heavy wagon and be ready to help others tomorrow. Bishop Miller had been overseeing the construction of the new ferry over the Missouri River, which was launched that evening. Then Young addressed the assembly at Mosquito Creek on the situation of the church.

The next evening Brothers Grover and Lewis arrived at headquarters to tell the Council that the U.S. Army had arrived on the hill and wanted volunteers. And the next day, July 1st, Captain James Allen and three others of the First Regiment of Dragoons arrived at Mosquito Creek Camp with orders from Col. J. M. Kearny of the Army of the West dated June 19, 1846 requesting a battalion of 500 volunteers to fight in the Mexican War.

¹²⁶ Wikipedia does not mention this event but discusses an earlier Battle at Blue Coat's Village. Blue Coat was the Pawnee leader in a village "near the Loup River at a site called Plum Creek." (I think this is Beaver Creek, the present name, and the name used by Holbrook, however Bathsheba Smith later wrote that they camped on "Plumb Creek" a day before they reached the Pawnee Village on Loup Fork.) There was a Presbyterian mission about a mile away that had an open view to the earth lodges. It was attacked by a group of Lakota (Sioux) fighters on June 27, 1843.

¹²⁷ Journal of Willard Richards, Volume 1, December 1836-April 1840. Church History Library, MS 1490.

¹²⁸ Scott was a military minded convert from Canada, born in Ireland, who was carrying a cannon in his wagon.

When Brigham Young explained his intention of proceeding through Indian Territory to the Rocky Mountains, according to Richards, “(Allen) assumed the responsibility of saying that we may go to Grand Island and stay till they can go on and the young men return.” Captain Allen also promised to write the President to give them permission to stay on their route if necessary.

Brigham accepted the offer for soldiers at once. He had already commissioned Parley P. Pratt to recruit 500 men from Garden Grove and Pisgah for his own reasons: to create an advance pioneer company to head for the mountains that summer. This was a win/win situation. He would send Millers party, the Emmett group, and a company of early-arriving Saints from Nauvoo to Grand Island and buy needed supplies for the longer trek to the mountains with the money paid to the recruits. And he now had legal permission to winter the Saints in Indian Territory.

With the new ferry now functional, Brigham Young moved his large family across the Missouri River on July 2nd and settled at Cold Spring Camp, which Miller had set up on Little Papillion Creek on the western side. Brigham returned in the evening to John D. Lee’s camp on the east side of the river, where Lee had just arrived from his second trading trip to Missouri. Lee offered to sign up for the Battalion, but Brigham Young said he was needed with the Saints.

Leaving the army officers at Sarpy’s trading post, Elders Young, Kimball, and Richards set out early in the morning for Mt. Pisgah in President Young’s carriage to begin recruiting men for the battalion. It would be a five-day trip. They first called on John D. Lee and stopped at the Mosquito Creek encampment about 1 p.m. That evening they passed several different companies who were either travelling west or encamped, a total of 108 wagons. Among these companies were Joseph Holbrook, Anson Call, Ranson Shepherd, David Lewis and his brothers Beason and Neriah, who would soon join up with the Miller and Emmett group.

While Brigham was at Mt. Pisgah, these newly arrived companies crossed the Missouri River by swimming their cattle and ferrying their wagons, manning the ferry for the next three days to pay for their passage, and settled near Brigham Young’s family at Cold Spring Camp.

Many of the newly recruited battalion volunteers from Mt. Pisgah set out for the Bluffs on July 8th. Richards, Young, and Kimball followed them the next day.

By this time Charles Crismon and George Miller had already set out west in 32 wagons with some of the displaced Presbyterians, their company having been reduced when several of their young men

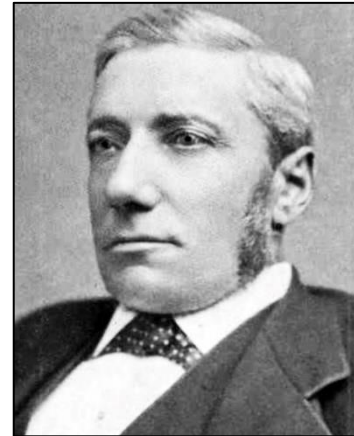


Captain James Allen
Courtesy of Iowa State History and
Archives Department

signed up for the Mormon Battalion. William C. Staines,¹²⁹ a member of Charles Crismon's Ten wrote: "Some four of Bishop Miller's teamsters left to join the Battalion. Brother Henry G. Boyle was the one who drove the team I traveled in, but now I had to be teamster."

As they were crossing on the ferry, the Miller group was joined by John Lowe Butler¹³⁰ with 20 wagons from Fort Vermillion, and his leader James Emmett soon caught up with them.¹³¹ Allen Russell of the Emmett group wrote that Bishop Miller's party had been reduced to only about 50 people. I think that is a bit low—I estimate about 65.

From the Elkhorn Ferry it was 83 miles to the Pawnee Village. Staines continued:



William Staines

On arriving at the mission and village, we found that all the Indians had left, fearing, I presume, that they would be punished if they were caught by the government troops. The brethren helped these men to cache all the property, which they did by digging a large hole in the ground in a dry place, putting the goods into it, covering them with the soil taken out of the hole, and building a large fire over the place, that the ashes might cover up all the trace of the digging. One of the men of this party joined the church and emigrated to the Valley with us. We found several fields of grain ready for harvesting, with potatoes, turnips and sweet corn, as well as a large quantity of wheat, barley, and oats already threshed and housed. This was all handed over to our camp.

The Crismon and Miller group had been gone three days when Brigham Young and his entourage arrived back from recruiting at Mt. Pisgah on July 12th. Brigham sent a message to those on the west side of the Missouri to come back and enlist if they wished. There would be a meeting at noon with Captain Allen and Thomas L. Kane of Pennsylvania, who was at Washington and had come planning to go with the Mormons' troop to California.¹³²

¹²⁹ Staines had been crippled as a youth and was supporting himself as a shoemaker. The source of his quotes is William C. Staines, *Among the Poncas, Faith-Promoting Stories*, vol. 2, 1880, pp. 31-67 and Orson Whitney's *History of Utah*.

¹³⁰ Butler had been converted by Emmett in Kentucky in 1835.

¹³¹ The Emmett group had lived with all things in common. Before arrival at the Bluffs, they appointed a committee of three to distribute the goods to individuals.

¹³² Captain James Allen was born in 1806 of Irish parents in Ohio and entered West Point in 1825, where he was a classmate of Robert E. Lee. He was no stranger to Iowa, where he had been living for 13 years. He was serving in 1833 with Colonel Kearny, who with Allen and 112 other men traveled from Oklahoma to establish the Fort Sanford near the present site of Ottumwa, Iowa where young Robert E. Lee also served. James Allen was promoted to Captain in 1837 and supervised the Sac and Fox Indian agencies there. When it closed, Captain Allen recommended a new fort at the junction of the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers to supervise the Sauk and Meskwaki Indians. Colonel Kearny, who by then was back at Ft. Leavenworth, ordered materials to be sent by steamboat up the Mississippi and Des Moines Rivers in February 1843. Allen was in command of Fort Des Moines until its dissolution in 1846, when the two tribes were translocated to Kansas. The last of them had been rounded by March 10, 1846, when Allen received orders from Kearny to recruit soldiers from

Officers for the Battalion were appointed on July 14th.

President Young called the Council together at Elder Taylor's camp¹³³ and proposed that an exploratory party look for a site up the east side of the Missouri River for the main body of the Saints to spend the upcoming winter and that a small company under Miller go at once to Grand Island and from there over the mountains. He also suggested that two of the apostles be sent to England to recruit emigrants to Vancouver Island. The council voted to approve all three suggestions. Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor were to leave at once for England, and President Young with Elders Kimball and Richards were to organize two companies of Saints who had just arrived at Taylor's camp to follow Miller to Grand Island. The rest of the brethren were assigned to get the new recruits together and instruct them how to behave, including to wear their temple garments. Brigham was implementing his plan for going west at same time that he was recruiting the Battalion.

Newel Knight,¹³⁴ who was one of the newly arrived Saints chosen for Grand Island wrote:

Attendance of the brethren was requested...for the purpose of making up the companies of the volunteers for the California expedition.... President Young proposed that some of the young men go over the mountains, some to Grand Island, some to stay here and bring up the poor from Nauvoo to this place. "Take your choice. If you go over the mountains you will have a hard time. If you stay here you must send back teams to bring up the poor." Quite a number wanted to go over the mountains, and some to go to the Grand. Volunteers were called to repair the ferry road for those on the east side who wished to join the company.

The next day, July 17th, President Young called together men on the west of the river who had not enrolled in the Battalion to form two companies to make the settlement at Grand Island. The first group was called the Brigham Young Company, consisting of 211 people in 68 wagons. The second was the Heber C. Kimball Company with 73 wagons and 230 people. The next four days were spent organizing the two groups.¹³⁵

About that time the men who had been sent to find a place to winter on the east side of the river, reported to the Council that they had gone north of the Boyer River, which joined the Missouri about 15 miles to the north, and found the area unfavorable. President Young was beginning to feel that most of the Saints should winter where they were. Just getting that many wagons across the Missouri River could take months.

among the Mormons for the War with Mexico. Allen, who was by then a Lieutenant Colonel, traveled from his closed fort with three cavalry soldiers to recruit the Mormons. Garden Grove was a 57 mile march straight south from Des Moines. After recruiting and marching out with the Mormon Battalion, Colonel Allen died August 23, 1846, at the age of 40. He was buried at Ft. Leavenworth. <https://jindquist.com/allen.html>. William E. Whittaker, *Frontier Forts of Iowa: Indians, Traders, and Soldiers, 1682-1862*.

¹³³ Taylor's camp soon came to be called Council Point.

¹³⁴ This and all other Newel Knight quotations come from his autobiography and journal, 1846-1847, Church History Library MS 767. Knight was a miller and merchant who was acquainted with Joseph Smith since 1826 and was an early member of the church in May 1830. He was president of the Colesville branch that moved from New York to Jackson County in 1833 and experienced the expulsion from Far West. He was a member of the Nauvoo high council.

¹³⁵ The names of all the participants can be found on the lists of the two companies at the Church History Library MS 14290.

July 21st was an eventful day. The Mormon Battalion marched out of camp, and the two newly formed companies started out for Grand Island. Presidents Young, Kimball, and Richards accompanied them to the Elkhorn River and watched the first 14 wagons cross using a raft built earlier by Charles Crismon and Bishop Miller, and assured the group that they would soon be on their heels or send word.

Meanwhile, some of Miller's teams at the Pawnee village were escorting the Presbyterian missionaries back to the Bluffs. As he recalled,

We received in payment for saving the effects of the missionaries their standing crop of wheat, oats, and garden vegetables, together with a lot of old corn, which was all better for us than money. While the teams were gone with the missionaries' goods, we harvested and threshed our grain, shelled the corn and sacked it, all ready for a move on the return of our teams.¹³⁶

Brigham Young's two new companies had only traveled 15 miles when they met six men of Miller's group returning with four wagons transporting missionary and government property which had been salvaged and some things from the Pawnee village which had been rescued from the fire.

Meanwhile, Elders Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, and Orson Hyde left by steamboat from Sarpy's landing on their way to England. On board with them were the missionaries from the Pawnee Village.

The new companies were making about 14 miles a day, following the trail that the Miller and Emmett groups had taken. About six miles from the Pawnee village, Charles Crismon was surprised to run into the two camps, having had no idea that Brigham would be sending 441 people to join them. Charles reported to Miller, who promptly came to meet with them, and on the next day, August 2nd, the Brigham Young Company arrived at the Pawnee village followed by the Heber C. Kimball Company two days later. The village was still deserted except for the companies of Miller and Emmett, as the Indians had still not arrived home from their buffalo hunt.

They all met in council at Miller's camp on August 5th. It was not clear who should now be in charge, so Newel Knight and John Kay were sent back to the Bluffs carrying a letter to Brigham. The combined group consisted of about 553 people in 193 wagons of which about 80% were from the newly arriving Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball Companies.

Knight and Kay returned three days later with a letter from the Twelve revealing surprising news: They were to go no farther that season. Brigham had changed his mind. He wrote:

We are satisfied that it will be impolitic for any company to attempt to cross the mountains this fall. And you will have to be diligent to prepare for winter.... We shall be able to come up with you before you will want to leave Pawnee in the spring....

Then he answered their question about who was in charge:

We would suggest for your consideration that George Miller preside, assisted by Newel Knight, Joseph Holbrook, Titus Billings, Hiram Clark, Lewis Bartholomew, David Lewis, John

¹³⁶ Dr. H. W. Mills, DeTal Palo Tal Astilla, p. 107, JSTOR.

A. Mikesell, Solomon Hancock, Charles Chrisman (sic), Erastus Bingham, Thomas Gates, Asahel Lathrop.¹³⁷

Interestingly, not one of the proposed leaders was from the Emmett group. The letter continued:

According to the best knowledge we have, we are now disposed to recall our recommendation of making Fort Laramie this fall, for there is danger of the fire cutting off supplies for your stock and we would like you as near as that we may visit each other occasionally this winter.

The surprising orders were, of course, unanimously sustained despite the group's disappointment that they would not be crossing the mountain that year. They met together under an arbor they had constructed for church meetings and elected Miller and the recommended high council.

That evening while the pioneers were threshing, they spotted eight Indians approaching. Emmitt interpreted and found that they were seven chiefs or braves of the Ponca Indian nation, who had come to make a treaty with the Pawnees against the Sioux, who had destroyed the Pawnee settlement. When they heard that the Mormons planned to winter near the Pawnee village, the Poncas were alarmed and pointed out that the Mormons' large number of animals would ruin the surrounding grass. Worse, they were in an active Indian war zone that would not be safe for them, and that included Grand Island as well. They invited the settlers to join them for the winter in their own territory about 100 miles to the north where there were a great deal of rushes to sustain the cattle. I suspect that the Poncas also feared the Sioux and welcomed the Mormons as allies.

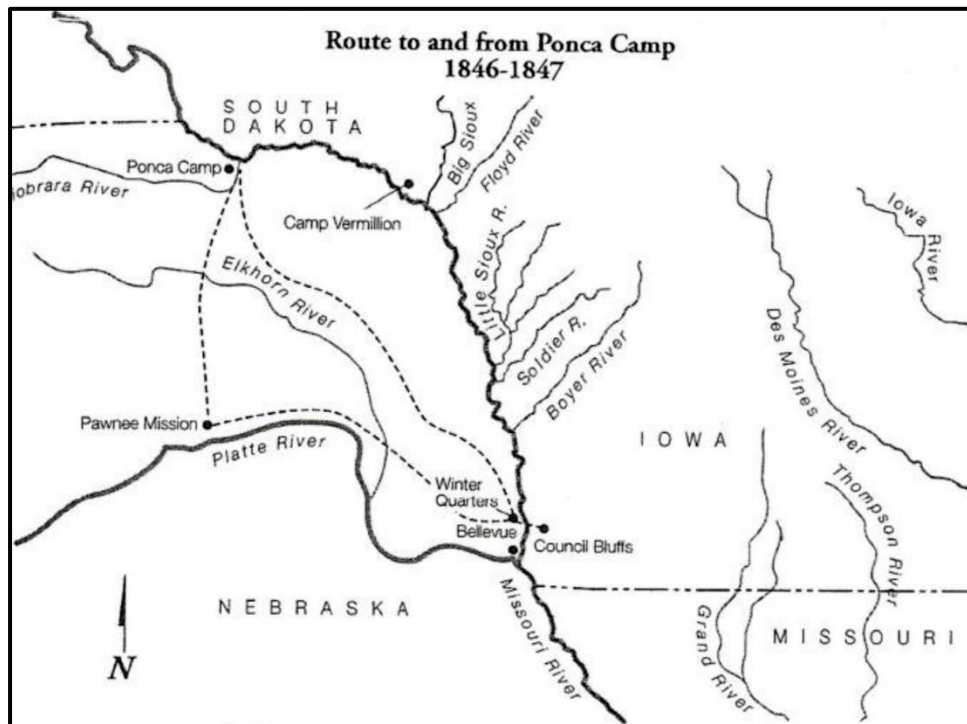
The invitation was accepted. It was decided to leave 20 families¹³⁸ at the Pawnee village led by David Gates and move the rest north to the Ponca land near the Missouri River for the winter. Gates was to camp on Beaver Creek, about six miles below the Pawnee village to keep their cattle out of the Pawnees' corn, but a few days later President Miller changed the place of their location from Beaver Creek to the old Missionary Station.¹³⁹

The decision to move was made by a unanimous vote of the council. They reorganized their companies and crossed the Loup Fork on August 12th headed for the Ponca settlement on the Niobara River near its junction with the Missouri. George Miller sent a letter to Brigham Young from the Pawnee village via Burrier Griffin explaining that they were headed for Fort Laramie and intended to keep in contact, which suggests that he was already planning a northern route via the Niobrara River that summer. When this message reached Brigham Young on August 20th, the church leaders felt Miller was deceived regarding the locality of the Ponca, which was only about 50 miles west of Fort Vermillion and "that he was running wild through the counsel of Emmett."

¹³⁷ The several sources for this story variably render Lathrop's name as Lothrop, Lathrup, or Lothrup. In quoting them I have used the spelling Lathrop as used in *FamilySearch* LZLC-NFT.

¹³⁸ These are the families: Jacob Gates, Charles Shumway, Ephraim B. Whitney, Lyman Hinman, Gardner, Potter, Field Garr, Dolpas Babcock, Charles Dalton, William Cook Mitchell, Jacob Casteel, Lewis Dann, R. Shepherds and several other men.

¹³⁹ Brigham Young recalled this last group to Winter Quarters in October, concerned about their precarious position and circumstances.



Meanwhile, Brigham Young was struggling with where to situate the Saints gathering on the west of the Missouri River in Indian Territory and met with the Council on August 7th to consider the issue. One possibility was to build a settlement near the Elkhorn River where they were building a bridge to give them access to the Platte. Or should they settle “every man for himself” as was the case on the east side of the river? Brigham proposed that they organize in city form and challenged the council members to find the best location for it. On August 11th he began to move his own family from Cold Spring to a new temporary camping ground at Cutlers Park¹⁴⁰ until after haying. That day, \$5,860 in welcome Battalion pay arrived from Ft. Leavenworth.

Following the Ponca chiefs, on August 23rd the four companies totaling about 400 people in 160 wagons reached the Ponca settlement on the Niobrara (Running Water) River where it joins the Missouri 110 miles to the north of the Bluffs. The unexpectedly long trip took 12 days and covered 103 miles. About 2,000 Poncas came out to meet them, and the two groups exchanged gifts and had a great feast, after which the Mormons chose a camp location about twelve miles down the Missouri River.

That very day, Brigham was addressing the Saints at the bowery on the east side of the river at Council Point on his plans to move the camp for his family, the Twelve, and the initial company on the other side of the river. Since the land west of the river was Indian Territory, it was not certain

¹⁴⁰ This was about 3.5 miles west of the future Winter Quarters.

that the chiefs would allow the Saints to stay there, having only given temporary permission to settle. He would check. The Omaha's had just returned from their hunt.

On August 28, 1846, Brigham Young met in a double tent at Cutler's Park with Big Elk and the other principal Omaha chiefs and about 80 braves after shaking hands and smoking the pipe of peace. Logan Fontenelle, the interpreter, was present.¹⁴¹ Brigham promised to fix their guns and make a field for them and wanted some of their honorable men to watch his cattle. Big Elk was willing, but was afraid of their "grandfather," President Polk, and also wanted to know what the neighboring Otoe tribe would say. Eventually they approved on the condition that no game be hunted by the pioneers. Colonel Kane was notified of the treaty and asked to report it to Washington. So, they made a deal, but still had not selected an exact location.

Up in Ponca territory, squabbles began among the four groups of settlers, beginning with dissatisfaction about the location of camp. Their council met to settle feelings, but things got worse. The normally genial Newel Knight wrote on August 30th,

Something came before the meeting for adjustment which President Miller handled in his usually harsh manner independently of the Council, which instead of uniting the people rather soured their feelings and I fear will create division among them. There was some grumbling..., and Bishop Miller basically told them to leave if they didn't like what was going on.

Even William Staines, who was part of Miller's company, wrote, "all but the occupants of ten wagons which were Miller's immediate family and closest friends" agreed that he was going contrary to Brigham's advice. Charles was captain over all five Tens in Miller's company, but he and his family traveled together with Miller in the "Fifth Ten," so it appears that he still supported Miller. Staines was in Miller's Second Ten.

The Poncas summoned Miller and Knight and said they would allow the settlers to move up the river if they wished. The camp was generally eager to do so, but some supported Asahel Lathrop and William Kay who wanted to move down the river 50 or 60 miles. Around September 3rd, the majority moved 20 miles up the Missouri into the Niobrara River about a mile from the Ponca Indians, leaving Lathrop and Kay at their first camp. This new camp became their winter home. By the 8th the main group had begun building a fort, enclosing 110 lots on



A Ponca Village - undated
Wyoming State Archives

¹⁴¹ Fontenelle, also known as Shon-ga-ska (White Horse) was the son of a respected French American fur trader. His mother was a daughter of Big Elk.

the Niobrara River two miles from where it flowed into the Missouri. While some were cutting house logs, others built a bridge on the creek for hauling hay. George Miller preached on September 9th and proposed sending a few men west as far as Fort Laramie to explore the route for their expected spring emigration.

The next day the company permanently split up, and Isaac John Hill,¹⁴² Ebenezer Richardson,¹⁴³ two other families, and three single men left the Ponca settlement and traveled with Lathrop and Kay down the Missouri River until they found plenty of rushes for cattle to graze. From Horace Whitney's¹⁴⁴ journal:

Formerly part of George Miller's Ponca camp (and also, along with Ebenezer Richardson, in Miller's company since Nauvoo), Lathrop became disenchanted with Miller's leadership and left the Niobrara settlement with ten other families to come to Winter Quarters. Having traveled the west banks of the Missouri for two hundred miles, he recommended his tiny settlement as an ideal grazing ground for the church cattle at a spot roughly equidistant between Winter Quarters and the Niobrara River. The rush bottoms along the Missouri above Winter Quarters were covered with a growth of rushes or "jointed grass" that stayed green most of the winter.¹⁴⁵

Then on September 10th, Houtz, Shurtleff, and possibly Zachariah Wilson, who had not followed Lathrop, started for Council Bluffs to see the Twelve and obtain goods for trade with the Poncas. By September 15th they were reporting to Brigham Young and the Council. According to Willard Richards' notes, they presented secret letters from Miller's company including one from George Miller to Peter Sharpy to get goods for the Indians. (Brigham preferred that Miller trade only with the Saints.) They reported that the Ponca chiefs had sent their warriors to guard Miller's camp from the squaws and children to prevent petty stealing. The Ponca camp was reported to be in good health, with but one death and one man sick. They also mentioned Lathrop and Kay's group who had dissented.

Brigham Young and the Twelve were still at Cutler's Park on September 14th when they got news of the Battle of Nauvoo, in which the remaining Saints, who had been too poor to move west were forcibly driven out. The Twelve sent William Kimball, Charles Duke, and John Green and Amasa Russell with wagons for Nauvoo to bring up the poor Saints. The next day they assigned Solomon Case and George Redding to carry a letter to Pawnee Village President Jacob Gates to recall them to the Missouri River. And on the 19th Brigham and the Twelve surveyed 60 lots in their new location

¹⁴² Hill was a blacksmith. He had four teenage children from his first wife, who died in Kirtland. His new wife had a seven year old daughter and was six months pregnant with a baby boy who was born at their new settlement on the river and died at the age of five months at Winter Quarters. He was later an original settler of Bear Lake County.

¹⁴³ Richardson was a Danite, and an associate of John D. Lee, who later helped to run a cattle operation in the rushes with the group.

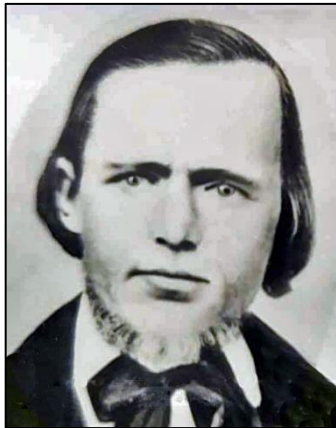
¹⁴⁴ Horace was a son of Bishop Newell Whitney and thus an insider on affairs at Winter Quarters. He got the story from Lathrop himself when he traveled to Winter Quarters that month for supplies.

¹⁴⁵ Such growth is now almost extinct. Lathrop's herd was probably just east of Tekamah, Burt County, Nebraska. Charles Kelley, ed., *Journals of John D. Lee, 1846–1847 and 1859* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 23, editor's note.)

which they named Winter Quarters. The move from Cutler Park began a week later. Winter Quarters was divided up into wards by October 2nd.

The dissension in the Ponca settlement continued. Newel Knight recorded in his diary on September 16th,

(Bishop Miller) does not regard the council in making or giving laws, which has in some degree disaffected the people towards him... A war party shot a number of our cattle. President Miller was very angry at the news of our cattle being shot.... He said many hard things, which were calculated to make division among us. He gave orders to his company to separate their cattle and herd them by the new area. He has not regarded the council, which in some degree disaffected the people towards him.



Joseph Holbrook

Holbrook wrote that feelings settled down a bit by September 20th, when “many of the brethren confessed their wrongs” in Sacrament meeting.

But the discord in the Ponca community also involved disagreement about the sharing of goods. James Emmett argued on September 27th that they should share equally in common as his group had done at Ft. Vermillion. Hiram Clark of the Council challenged him. Newel Knight, who had already tried the law of consecration in the early days at Kirtland also argued against it, but Miller, who had run a similar program in the pineries of Wisconsin disagreed. The people felt he was pushing for power.

On September 29th brothers Houtz and Shurtliff returned from the Bluffs with a cannon, some supplies, and letters of instruction from the Twelve, which reported their dissatisfaction.

During the round trip by land of Houtz and Shurtliff, two of the dissenters, Asahel Lathrop and Isaac Hill, were making their way down the Missouri River from their settlement in the reeds to report to Brigham Young and the Council. October 3rd, Willard Richards wrote:

About 1 p.m. (Isaac) John Hill and Asahel Lathrop arrived in company having left their families on Sunday morning previous on the rush bottoms about 70 miles above on the River Missouri with seven other families and three single men, they having left Bishop Miller at Punca¹⁴⁶ (sic) and come down to get food for cattle etc. For six days they had only two squirrels and one goose, very poor, and one turtle and had become very weak before they arrived in camp. They reported plenty of rushes where their families were, and that Br. Miller had made a treaty with the Puncas and agreed to defend them from the Sioux.

Horace Whitney gave his own interpretation. The next day he wrote:

I forgot to mention that Bro. Lathrop and another brother arrived here yesterday from Miller's camp. They had been stripped of nearly all they possessed and moved away from Bro.

¹⁴⁶ The name of the tribe was consistently misspelled as “Punca” by the Mormons at the Bluffs.

Miller's some distance, there they concluded to come down here, supposing it to be only thirty miles.

The disagreement at the Ponca settlement over communal living continued through October 10th, when Newel Knight recorded a long transcription of the Sunday meeting. He was sympathetic to the idea, but felt the time was not right. The biographer of Newell Drake, another Ponca saint, gave this interpretation:

During September James Emmett and George Miller promoted a forced common property-- a law of consecration, (a principle taught by Joseph Smith.) This push might have stemmed partly from the relative destitution of Emmett's company (at Ft. Vermillion) and occasioned slights of selfishness toward Emmett's company. The idea of common property was unpopular among the company and highly discouraged by the High Council, who considered it out of their authority to establish such drastic measures. Miller argued that as a bishop, it was within his right to attend to the properties of the church, trumping the high council, and that it was God's will that he do so (insinuating that he was God's mouthpiece). Brigham Young caught wind of the disagreement and sent a letter discouraging the idea, specifically "until we are more perfect, all such attempts will end in poverty and confusion."¹⁴⁷

To survive, they needed food and supplies, so despite the distance, Ponca camp teams repeatedly traveled to Winter Quarters and further down the river to towns in Missouri and returned with supplies they could trade for.

Holbrook, Emmett, and Mathews set out from the Ponca Camp to explore a trail to Ft. Laramie on October 14th. From Miller and Emmett's point of view, this was to be the way to the Rocky Mountains the coming spring, not only for the Ponca Saints, but for all the Mormon emigrants.

That day Newel Knight found a rock that could serve as a millstone and hauled it home the next day just in time to see off a large group of the Ponca settlement men setting out overland for Winter Quarters. This was the first of three trips that George Miller personally made to Winter Quarters that fall and winter. The trip overland was about 150 miles. It was two hundred miles by boat, but by wagon it took longer. Miller and his 40 wagons arrived on October 25th, and his captain, Charles Crismon, was with him. The women and children remained in the Ponca village including Polly Crismon, who was six months pregnant. Although he and Polly did not know it at the time, Charles would not see his family again for six months.

In Winter Quarters, Horace Whitney recorded in his diary that men were sent 70 miles upriver on October 19th to Brother Lathrop's encampment at Rush Bottoms with 121 head of oxen and cows, mostly from the large herd of Heber C. Kimball. The rushes were a great place to winter the animals.

The next day Ebenezer Richardson arrived at the Ponca camp from the Rush Bottoms and stayed until the 23rd, when he returned home with another recruit, Solomon Hancock,¹⁴⁸ who said he was

¹⁴⁷ A Ponca Winter Saint: D. Newell Drake, *FamilySearch* Memories LT54-4H4.

¹⁴⁸ Hancock was an early convert to Mormonism, baptized by Parley P. Pratt near Kirtland. He was an early missionary and settler in Jackson County, former branch president at Yelrome (Morley's settlement), and had

leaving the Ponca settlement to more easily winter his cattle and to get honey. The Council met to attend to the affair of trade with the Indians. Brothers Kay and Staines, who had been appointed to take charge of that trade in the absence of Houtz and Shurtleff, sent an express team to Winter Quarters for a new supply of goods. They reported that all things were favorable and requested two wagons and teams to haul the skins and furs for which they had traded, and also to send flour, coffee, sugar, etc. for making feasts for the Indians.

Bishop Miller arrived at Winter Quarters with his 40 wagons on October 24th on their way to Missouri to get provisions for moving west in the spring, and he spoke the next day in church. Willard Richards reported that Miller came to the stand and explained that their camp was about 153 miles upstream at the junction of Running Water and the Missouri River and that the group was generally in good health, having experienced just six deaths. Miller announced that he had sent Mathews, Holbrook, and Emmett up the Niobrara and further west to examine a possible western passage.

After the church service, Miller met with Brigham Young and the Council, where he further advocated for the more northern route to the mountains, which he felt was the nearest and best route. There were exchanges between Miller and Brigham Young over this and various other issues, mostly involving trade between the two groups and with Sarpy. Bishop Miller requested the Ponca group's share of the first payment for the Battalion's service, but apparently did not get it. There were also disagreements over the watering and feeding of Miller's newly arrived animals without permission. Daniel Drake, one of the Ponca visitors wrote: "He (Young) handled the case very ruff (sic). He said that Miller and Emmett had a divisive spirit and that anyone that would follow them would go to hell, etc., that they would sacrifice this people to aggrandize themselves or to get power."

On October 30, 1846, the day before Miller's departure, Willard Richards wrote, "Elders Charles Crismon and Bryan W. Nowlin¹⁴⁹ received letters of authority to go to the States and gather up young, middle aged, athletic men who could leave their families comfortable and prepare to go over the mountains in the spring."¹⁵⁰ Their specific destination was Monroe County, Mississippi.

two sons in the Mormon Battalion. With him at this time were his second wife, who was five months pregnant, and four children under ten. Solomon died a year later in Pottawattamie County.

¹⁴⁹ Bryan Ward Nowlin was 31 years old. He was born in Tennessee a year after his parents were married in South Carolina. He married Jane Hardin in Marshall, Tennessee on March 21, 1839, just before moving to Pontotoc County, Mississippi with his parents and his wife's family. They had four children by 1844, when he, his wife Jane, and his father's family were baptized by Elder James W. Cummings. Pontotoc is close to Monroe County and was visited multiple times by John Brown on his mission during that time, although Bryan Nowlin's name is not mentioned in Brown's journal, but Brown did some missionary work with James W. Cummings. They all moved to Nauvoo, where his younger brother Jabez married Amanda Thomas April 13, 1846, just before the exodus. They were at Mt. Pisgah on May 27, 1846, when his father received a patriarchal blessing, and it was there that Jabez, volunteered for the Mormon Battalion. Bryan joined one of the two companies who met the Miller party at the Pawnee village and ended up in Ponca with his wife, children, his elderly parents, and his young sister-in-law.

¹⁵⁰ Willard Richards, Journal History of the Church.

A chill east wind was blowing when Elders Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards and President Brigham Young met in council at the post office the next day. Charles was given a few letters to carry to the States.

Charles and Nowlin probably traveled part way down the Missouri in company with the Miller group to their trading destination, then further down the Missouri by boat to St. Louis, and from there by steamer to Mississippi. Although he was not part of the Monroe County Branch, Bryan Nowlin seems to have been a logical choice for Brigham's errand, since he had served a mission in Mississippi. As for Charles Crismon, he had not spent significant time there. It is unclear to me why he was selected for this assignment except for his reputation as a reliable captain.

Coincidentally, it was only two days before Crismon and Nowlin set out from the Bluffs that John Brown and six other men arrived home in Monroe County, Mississippi from the fort at Pueblo, where the Mississippi pioneers were wintering. Brown and his men had left their families in Pueblo on September 1st and set out for home to prepare the rest of the Monroe County Saints to travel to the mountains the following season.¹⁵¹

By the time that Crismon and Nowlin arrived, John Brown was already preparing the remaining Mississippi Saints to join Brigham Young's vanguard company to the mountains in the spring. Brown wrote:

After a few days' rest, we commenced to wind up our business and prepare to leave early in the spring for Council Bluffs, to go out with the church, when unexpectedly, in came two elders right from the Bluffs, namely Bryant (sic) Nowlin and Charles Crismon, with an epistle from the Council of the Twelve, instructing us to remain another year, (but) to fit out and send all the men we could to go as pioneers.¹⁵²

After trading in Missouri for needed supplies, Miller returned to the Bluffs just late enough to miss a meeting of the Council of Fifty which assembled in the President's new house at Winter Quarters on November 13th and made no excuse for missing it. He ran into Brigham and Heber C. Kimball the next day at the post office on the east side of the Missouri as he was leaving for the Poncas, and President Young informed him that he had nothing against him but his absence. Obviously, the two men were not on great terms. Willard Richards wrote that he and Brigham spent that evening reading Miller's pamphlet on Therianism.¹⁵³ Some errors were found.

Brothers Shurtleff and Houtz, who had been part of the 40 wagon shopping expedition, arrived at the Ponca colony from the Bluffs on November 22, having returned ahead of Miller. They brought news of sickness among the Saints at the Bluffs, Mount Pisgah, and Garden Grove, and many had died. They also brought the latest news from the fall of Nauvoo.

A week later, James Emmett, Joseph Holbrook, and William Matthews returned to the Ponca settlement from their exploration of the possible route to Ft. Laramie along the Niobrara River, having traveled over 400 miles in a country without a road and often even a trail. They had been on

¹⁵¹ While returning to Independence, Missouri, they happened onto the Mormon Battalion while passing through the battlefield of the Comanches and Pawnees.

¹⁵² John Zimmerman Brown, *Autobiography of Pioneer John Brown*, SLC January 1941, p.71.

¹⁵³ Therianism is the mythological ability to change into an animal.

their way for six weeks, but never reached Ft. Laramie, being forced to turn back when one of their mules became sick.

Miller arrived home with David Lewis on the same day. Knight wrote, "President arrived from the Bluffs, but he was so tired he did not meet with us." It must have been a shock to Polly Crismon that Charles was not with them.

The following day was Sunday. Miller addressed the congregation at the Ponca settlement, and so did Emmett, who reported on his recent exploration seeking Ft. Laramie. Knight wrote:

President Miller's intentions are to send a report of the Laramie route to the Twelve as soon as possible, but...the majority of the council thought it wisdom to delay that business a little. They met at my house this evening to consult. All that were present agreed that we delay until the Indian trade be closed, as some will then have to go there to make returns and settle business there as we cannot understand any necessity for a speedy report... He told the congregation it was no time to preach doctrine now, that it was for every man to look out for himself and get over the mountains the best he could.¹⁵⁴

In Winter Quarters the Council of Fifty held a series of meetings during December to consider Miller's plan for a northern route to the mountains. They were positively influenced by two visiting French trappers named Grosclaude and Cardinal who had lived among various Native American tribes for sixteen years had information about the Yellowstone and had a map of the country west of the Missouri and north of Bishop Miller's settlement.

The Council felt they needed to talk further with Miller, who at their invitation, again left Ponca on December 11th, this time with James Emmett, to attend a "grand council" meeting at Winter Quarters. Miller wrote that he hadn't wanted to make this second trip since the first was useless, but his son Joshua had not returned from Missouri where he had gone with others to buy grain, so Miller went partly in order to help get him home to Ponca.

On December 17, a messenger arrived in Winter Quarters from the Poncas with a letter from Joseph Holbrook reporting their abortive attempt to explore a route to Laramie. A week later Miller and Emmett themselves arrived in Winter Quarters and met with the Council of Fifty. Miller later wrote that his ideas were not "wholly overlooked in their deliberations...." Then Miller went 140 miles down the Missouri to find his son Joshua, who had gotten frost bitten, and brought him home.

Late in December the Council of Fifty proposed sending 2-3,000 men up the Niobrara, and from there to Ft. Laramie to set up a way station. Brigham took issue and reminded them that the Quorum of the Twelve was making the decisions. He wanted Miller to move to Winter Quarters with part of his family and help Bishop Whitney manage the fiscal concerns.

One reason that Brigham Young never warmed up to the northern plan was concerns about the hostile Sioux and Mandan tribes in that area. Holbrook had reported that the exploratory trip with Emmett was fairly direct, but that the Sioux were worried about a big group disturbing their buffalo hunting, and so were the Poncas. Holbrook also worried about sufficient grazing in competition with the buffalo herds. Brigham's translator, Logan Fontanelle, warned of infertile clay soil that

¹⁵⁴ Church History Library MS 767.

couldn't support crops and swamps along the Niobrara and recommended the original plan to follow the North Platte River. Another disadvantage of the northern plan was that it would require a longer journey for the Battalion's return. Perhaps most importantly, Brigham had become mistrustful of Miller and Emmett. In the battle for supremacy going on between the Twelve and the Council of Fifty, Miller and Emmett considered themselves Brigham's equals.

Brigham Young met with members of the High Council and conversed with James Emmett until noon on December 27th. The Council of Fifty also had a conversation with Emmett.

The difficult year of 1846 ended with sub-freezing temperatures for all the Mormon settlements and a near catastrophe for the Ponca Saints, who nearly lost everything the day after Christmas when a prairie fire set by the Poncas got out of control and threatened their settlement. Back fires ignited by the Saints to control it accidentally destroyed some hay and a few dwellings and wagons. Nonetheless, Newel Knight filled his journal at year-end with a long reflection of gratitude.

Meanwhile, Charles Crismon, Bryan Nowlin, and John Brown were getting ready to head back from Mississippi to the Bluffs. Brigham may have been hoping for a somewhat larger party of capable males to join him in the vanguard pioneer company, but the Mississippi Saints sent only four white male pioneers and four male black servants (slaves). Two of the white men brought their families. To arrive in time for the spring departure to the mountains required that they leave at once and travel by winter, so Charles Crismon, John Brown and Daniel M. Thomas¹⁵⁵ with his family in two wagons were on the road by January 10, 1847.

On January 11, 1847, Newell Knight died of pneumonia at the Ponca camp along with ten others in a local epidemic. And that month there were Indian problems in the camp. From Daniel Drake's biography,

Six Sioux in war costume appear to be spying out the fort's condition. The Saints had earlier heard rumors from mountaineers that the Sioux had threatened to massacre the fort because of the Saints' connection with their enemy, the Ponca. At this point, the lone cannon the brethren had brought up the river in September earns its keep—the Saints fire blanks five or six times, much to the terror of the Sioux warriors, who appear to never have witnessed such a weapon. The Sioux do not bother the Saints for the rest of their stay.¹⁵⁶

That winter Bishop Whitney gave a report on the housing situation in Winter Quarters. There were 621 households of which 538 were living in cabins that averaged 14 x 12.5 feet in size. The other 83 were in sod houses.

The leaders of the Quorum of the Twelve and the Council of Fifty continued their debates on how to proceed with the big move planned for the spring. The debate was abruptly settled on January 14th by a revelation that Brigham received of the "Word and Will of God"¹⁵⁷ concerning the emigration of the Saints. The document was read and approved by the High Council as revelation and then

¹⁵⁵ Daniel M. Thomas was married to Ann Crosby, the daughter of the leader of the group who were stranded at Pueblo. They traveled with a three month old infant.

¹⁵⁶ A Ponca Winter Saint: D. Newell Drake, *FamilySearch* Memories LT54-4H4.

¹⁵⁷ "The Word and Will of God" was the wording in Brigham's journal. It now appears in D&C 136, known as "The Word and Will of the Lord."

distributed to all the settlements. The names of President Young's emigration company were read aloud by Br. Hutchison to the Seventies on January 17th.

The next day Polly bore her eighth child, Emily Priscinda Crismon, at the Ponca camp. That day in Winter Quarters, W. W. Phelps reported that his thermometer reached 20 degrees below zero. He wrote, "The mercury, ashamed of the cold, hid itself in the ball."

The apostles George A. Smith and Amasa Lyman left Winter Quarters to visit the Saints living on the Pottawattamie lands east of the Missouri River to read to them the new revelation instructing them in the principles of emigration and how to organize a company. Miller and Emmett, having again been summoned to Winter Quarters, learned of Brigham's revelation on January 24th. The next day Bishop Miller visited the council meeting with Bishop Whitney where letters from Colonel Kane were read. The following day Whitney, Miller, and Orrin Porter Rockwell again met with the Council, which advised Miller to send his oxen to the marshes and take horses and mules to the Ponca settlement to bring his family to Winter Quarters.

The captains of the Hundreds and Fifties of the First Company met in the council house on January 29th, and Bishop Miller left Winter Quarters for the Ponca settlement with a copy of Brigham's revelation. That evening the choir met at the council house in Winter Quarters and enjoyed vocal and instrumental music and dancing.

The next afternoon Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow started out for Ponca to replace Miller as president and organize a company accompanied by Orrin Porter Rockwell with teams to bring down Bishop Miller's family, arriving on February 6th. At the Ponca settlement, Brother Benson made the nomination of new officers: Titus Billings, president, Erastus Bingham and Joseph Holbrook councilors, Hyrum Clark captain of Hundreds, and David Lewis and Vincent Shurtliff captains of Fifties, John Butler, Chandler Holbrook, V. Myers, Tuttle, Stanley, Boyce, Dalton, Goodell captains of Tens. The proposed camp numbered 396 saints, 98 of whom were men.

As it turned out, this wagon company would take them only as far as Winter Quarters, but it was originally intended to take them all the way to the mountains. When Brigham revealed his "Word and Will of God" on January 14th concerning the planned spring move to the mountains, he envisioned the Ponca settlement as his Third Company.¹⁵⁸ In either case, Miller and Emmett were conspicuously left out as leaders. But it turned out that they could not make it back to Winter Quarters in time.

The final decision on organizing a wagon company was ultimately to be made by the Ponca Saints as represented by their council, and Benson and Snow left Ponca settlement on February 11th without an answer. Upon arrival, Benson reported to the Council of Fifty that he had been to Ponca and read the revelation, which was received with joy, and that the camp at Ponca had about 70 lbs. of breadstuff per head. The Council approved the doings of Benson and Snow at Ponca and also of Orson Pratt at Mt. Pisgah, who had performed a similar duty there.

When the Ponca council met to make their decision, Miller complained that the Twelve had no right to dictate to the camp, since both he and James Emmett had been chosen by Joseph Smith to lead them. But Anson Call defended the Twelve, and the rest of the council agreed. Only five or six

¹⁵⁸ Doctrine and Covenants 136:12 Let my servants Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow organize a company.

wagons sided with Miller and Emmett. The newly formed company did not get underway for another three months.

Miller left the Ponca settlement for good on February 15th and moved with his family to Winter Quarters. Emmett left too but “kept on till he came to Cub Creek where he stayed with his family. He did not come where the church was at all, but stayed away. He did not come to see any, nor come near us.”¹⁵⁹

Thomas Woolsey and John Tippets, two Mormon Battalion volunteers who had been charged with escorting the sick and disabled men from Santa Fe, showed up unexpectedly at Winter Quarters on February 17th, having traveled 52 days, most of them without food, and having been robbed twice by Indians. They reported that a sick detachment of about 170 soldiers¹⁶⁰ of the Mormon Battalion had wintered at Pueblo. Nine others had died, and the rest had gone on to California. Brother William Crosby was also at Pueblo with his company of about 40 Mississippi Mormons who had arrived a year earlier. President Young responded by proposing to send 20 men to Pueblo to organize a meeting at Ft. Laramie when his vanguard company came through.

By this time Charles Crismon and John Brown were in St. Louis, having traveled about 400 miles from Monroe County, Mississippi. There they bought three more wagons and teams for the trip across the plains and drove north through Missouri, where a few miles out of St. Louis Bryan Nowlin, Matthew Ivory¹⁶¹ and James Stratton¹⁶² and his family overtook them, riding in a single wagon. The weather turned cold, and they suffered considerably, especially the black “servants.” One of them, whose name was Henry, died of pneumonia near Savannah, about 15 miles north of St. Joseph, but still 130 miles from the Bluffs. They buried him there and bought more cattle.



Savannah, Missouri
(courtesy Missouri digital Heritage)

Brigham Young was keen to leave Winter Quarters with his select group for the mountains as soon as possible. According to Richards,

President Young...expected as soon as boats run, that some government office would be here making some demand such as give more men during the war or something of the kind.

¹⁵⁹ John L. Butler Autobiography.

¹⁶⁰ The correct number of the sick detachment was 154 according to historian Leonard Arrington.

¹⁶¹ Matthew Ivory was not a Mississippi Saint but joined Nowlin in St. Louis and ended up in the vanguard party. He was from Pennsylvania and came west alone when his wife told him he must choose between him and the church.

¹⁶² James Stratton is the name given by John Brown in his autobiography. However, he does not appear on any lists of the Mississippi Saints nor in the Mormon Pioneer database. He and Ivory must have been hired to drive one of the extra wagons that they bought.

(He) desired that we start as quick as possible. Send on (ahead) 100 pioneers from each company and have our wagons ready. Watch the signs of the times.

He began in earnest to organize his vanguard company. On March 15th the pioneers met with Brigham at the council house including Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Ezra T. Benson, Orson Pratt, Amasa Lyman, presidents of companies, counselors, clerks and others.

George Miller had been put back to work as presiding bishop in charge of a large work group building a mill dam. He stuck around for about a month, being surprisingly helpful, but went on his own when he saw he had lost the battle. In a March 25th letter to Brigham Young, Miller recounted his long-held but unexpressed objections to settling in the Great Basin.

We would find it hard to sustain ourselves in food and raiment and would most likely bring on the thoroughfare where all the slime and filth, malcontents from Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, etc. would pass near us to the newly acquired territory of California and Oregon.

Then he argued for moving to New Mexico or Texas where Lyman Wight had located.¹⁶³

On March 23rd, Heber C. Kimball and several members of the Twelve held a meeting with David Lewis, a Ponca member who was visiting Winter Quarters. Lewis told them that the brethren at Ponca were trying their best to prepare for the mountains, another sign that Benson and Snow had expected this. They had lost many cattle who were chilled to death, but a few calves survived. All the cattle were run down. The trappers Cardinal and Grosclaude had given directions on the northern route to Bishop Miller and Brother Kay, but no one in the camp knew where to find them. No one has provisions to last twelve months, but eight or ten families have enough for four months. Relations with the Poncas were good. The tribe had obtained about 1,700 buffalo robes, and Sarpy's trader employed the brethren to deliver them in about two weeks.



David Lewis

The Council deliberated on the proper course for the Ponca brethren. Orson Pratt recommended that they concentrate and scatter as little as possible. They should come down and put in a strong spring crop. Lewis said that the Poncas were unwilling for them to leave even though Brother Miller had promised to leave a blacksmith and a few others to repair guns, etc. Richards replied that the speedier the Ponca brethren make a retreat for this place, the better for them. Heber C. Kimball agreed that they should come immediately so that some might recruit, fit out, and immediately go over the mountains. Willard Richards disagreed. "Forty days ago, they had 70 days provisions. It will take 20 days to get here, so they only have sufficient to save them from starvation."

That settled it. George A. Smith moved that the Ponca brethren be instructed to come down as quickly as possible to put in a spring crop. It was seconded and carried. Brother Lewis was to trade his cedar wood tomorrow in Winter Quarters and return at once with a letter that advised the Ponca group to "prepare (them)selves to go at a future day."

¹⁶³ Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846-1852*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1987, p. 158.

A week later, Charles Crismon arrived from Mississippi at Winter Quarters with John Brown, who wrote it was “the severest trip I had undertaken.” That is saying something, considering his difficult trip to Ft. Laramie and back the previous year. Soon after they arrived, another of their young negro men died.¹⁶⁴

As late as April 2nd Bishop Miller was still arguing his case. Another council meeting was held the next day, but significantly, Miller was absent. Brigham offered him a cabin at Winter Quarters, but Miller refused it and eventually went to Texas, joining Lyman Wight’s group.¹⁶⁵ Emmett looked westward to California.¹⁶⁶

Bryan Nowlin was well on his way from Winter Quarters to the Poncas to join his family, still 29 miles away from him. He could not have known that his mother had died January 1, 1846.¹⁶⁷ He still had a wife and four children to retrieve and also had his sister-in-law, and possibly also his father.¹⁶⁸ Traveling a day behind Nowlin, Charles Crismon was headed to the Ponca settlement for his own family along with John Lasley, who had a wife and three young children there.¹⁶⁹

While Charles was still on the trail to the Ponca settlement, Brigham Young’s vanguard company was pulling out of Winter Quarters on April 8th. At about half past five John Brown, just arriving from Mississippi, passed over the hill in a group of seven wagons headed for the Elkhorn River ferry barely in time to join Brigham Young. He wrote, “(I took) David Powell¹⁷⁰ and Mathew Ivory and the two black boys that survived and joined the pioneer camp.” Then Brown had to wait at the Elkhorn because the sudden arrival of Parley P. Pratt from England caused another week’s delay. Young, Heber C. Kimball, Ezra T. Benson, Orson Pratt, George A. Smith, Willard Richards, and Wilford Woodruff all returned on horseback to meet him. Then John Taylor turned up a day after that.¹⁷¹ Young urged them all to come along, but they wanted some time with their families, so it was decided that they would travel with the companies to follow.

After the reunion with the apostles the vanguard pioneers finally ferried across the Elkhorn on April 15th, 1847.

¹⁶⁴ The two young black men who survived were Oscar Crosby and Hark Lay. Soon they and Green Flake, who was at that time still in Pueblo, would be among the first Mormons ever to enter the Salt Lake Valley on July 22, 1847.

¹⁶⁵ From internet article on Strangites: Rather than go to Utah, Miller took a company of Mormons and joined Wight in Texas from December 15, 1847 until July 4, 1850. Then he returned to Voree with 23 of the Mormons. Some of Miller’s company remained in Voree, and others continued on with him to join the new settlements in Michigan. Miller was appointed general-in-chief in Strang’s “Literal kingdom of God” before finally returning to Wisconsin in 1856 and dying that year. <https://churchofjesuschristoflatterdaysaints.org/Wisconsin.html>.

¹⁶⁶ Emmett was disfellowshipped along with his followers November 8, 1847. George Miller was disfellowshipped December 3, 1848, but was never formally excommunicated.

¹⁶⁷ Joseph Holbrook wrote in his diary, “Sister Knowlen (sic) was buried January one on the bluffs about two miles from our fort.”

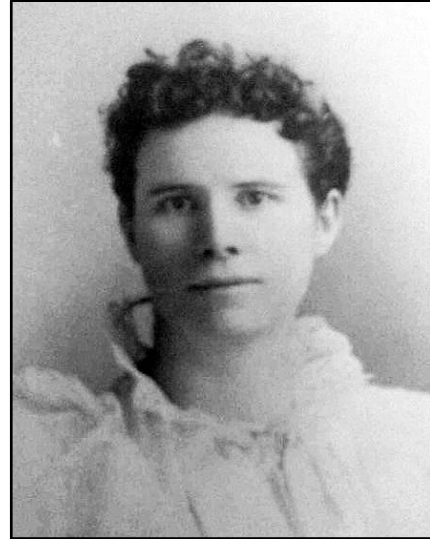
¹⁶⁸ According to his *FamilySearch* memories KWVG-VTZ his father, Peyton Wade Nowlin, “died enroute to Utah in 1847.”

¹⁶⁹ The Lasley family does not appear in the Ponca roster drawn up by Ezra T. Benson and Erastus Snow. However, his infant son was born there in November.

¹⁷⁰ I couldn’t find much on Powell, evidently not a Mississippi saint.

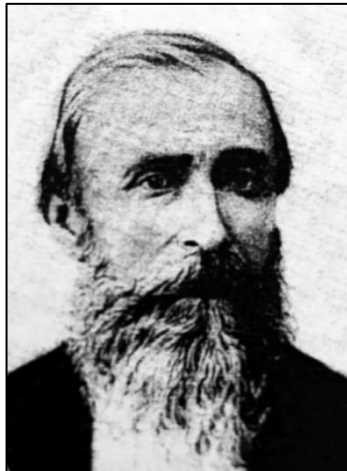
¹⁷¹ Orson Hyde remained in Britain to oversee the church.

The Ponca Saints did not get under way for Winter Quarters until April 10th. I calculate that if they traveled 12-15 miles a day and Charles and John Lasley did the same, they met on the trail about 30 miles out of the Ponca Camp. Charles' son George, who would turn fourteen on July 5th, would have led the eight family members in one wagon with a yoke of oxen, a spare ox, four sheep, two bushels of wheat and corn, and 25 lbs. of flour. His sister Martha was sixteen. If Bryan Nowlin arrived a day ahead, Charles' arrival would not have been a surprise, but what a reunion it must have been. The 396 Saints of the Ponca settlement traveled the remaining 150 miles to Winter Quarters in about ten days, having missed Brigham Young's departure by a week or two. There the group broke up, settling on both sides of the Missouri River. Most stayed on the west side in what came to be called the Ponca Camp near Winter Quarters.¹⁷²



Martha Jane Crismon

After settling their family, Charles and George made the first of two trips with teams into Missouri to obtain supplies for the westward journey, probably traveling in a group of Ponca Saints. Erastus Bingham wrote that he was chosen as a *member of a committee* to go into Missouri and secure wagons and supplies for the journey west. Bryan Nowlin was also with them.



Bryan Nowlin

When Brigham Young's vanguard party arrived at Ft. Laramie on June 6th, they were welcomed by 17 Saints from Pueblo—including Mississippians and Battalion veterans—who had been waiting for them. Brigham dispatched Amasa Lyman to Pueblo to lead the remaining Mississippi Saints to the Salt Lake Valley.

When Bryan Nowlin returned from the Missouri shopping trip, he discovered that his wife Jane had deserted him and returned to Mississippi, taking their three children, two slaves, his team, carriage and supplies.¹⁷³ Nowlin left for the Valley a few days later with his 19 year old sister-in-law Amanda, where she eventually reunited with her husband Jabez when he returned with other Battalion soldiers. During the trip Nowlin married his cook and housekeeper, 17 year old Mary Susannah Cummings, the sister of James W. Cummings who

¹⁷² Allen Russell (in FS memories KVVQ-CZ4) wrote: "We settled on a little creek about two miles west of Winter Quarters, where the main body of the Saints were located. Before we reached there, the pioneers had started west with President Brigham Young at their head. Punckaw (Ponca) Camp, or part of the camp, stopped there and raised our crops and some went to other places. From the Bennett book: "The Ponca group crossed over to Iowa on the Winter Quarters ferry, settling as a unit seven miles north on 'a good spring on Mosquito Creek.'"

¹⁷³ From Mary Susannah Cumming's biography LLMJ-WMY. Jane Nowlin moved in with her non-Mormon parents who lived 40 miles from Monroe County in Pontotoc, Mississippi. She later remarried and lived to be 95 years old.

had baptized him. Her two unmarried brothers, Benjamin Franklin and Alva, were traveling with them.

It was probably on their second trip down the river to Missouri, that Charles and George Crismon secured a millstone to transport to the Valley. But there were mill problems to be faced at Winter Quarters as well. Jacob Gates, the captain of Crismon's Ten wrote, "Was hindered at Winter Quarters on account of getting grinding (done) until some of the company had been gone two weeks. Uncertain whether we leave Thursday the 17th of June."

The group that followed the trail of Brigham Young's pioneers that summer was huge; 1,489 people were on the official rosters. According to the explicit instructions in Brigham Young's revelation, the Camp of Israel was "organized with captains of Hundreds, captains of Fifties, and captains of Tens, with a president and his two counselors at their head, under the direction of the Twelve Apostles."¹⁷⁴ The only available apostles were Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor, fresh off their mission to England, so their role was largely ceremonial, and their names are associated with all four of their Hundreds. Brigham's brother, John Young, was given general command over all four companies. The word "Hundred" referred to wagons, not people, each Hundred averaging about 375 people. The unit of travel was the Fifty, which was divided into five Tens.

It would be misleading to name the exact day that each Hundred departed, since its Fifties did not always travel together and sometimes it took more than a day for an entire Fifty to get underway. Let us just say that the Pratt/Taylor emigration company left June 17-21, 1847. They assembled on the west side of the Elkhorn River after crossing on a ferry about 25 miles from Winter Quarters, and each Fifty required several days to organize.

On June 19th, the Crismons left Winter Quarters in Jedediah M. Grant's¹⁷⁵ Hundred, Willard Snow's Fifty, and Jacob Gates' Ten, only 45 days after Charles reached Winter Quarters with the pioneers from Mississippi. Since Charles and his family wrote little or nothing about the trip to the Valley, I will tell their story through the journals of their traveling companions.

John B. Fairbanks, Captain of the Fourth Ten of Willard Snow's Fifty wrote:

The crick (probably Big Papillion Creek) (was too) high to cross. Stayed all day 20th. Crossed over and drove to the Elkhorn and crossed and was organized into the 4th company of 10 and second fifty and third hundred by J. M. Grant.

It was not just weather that complicated the assembly of the companies. There were Indian problems even before they embarked. John Vance, the captain of the First Ten of Snow's Fifty noted this incident which must have unnerved all of the massive company gathering that week:

¹⁷⁴ Doctrine and Covenants 136:3.

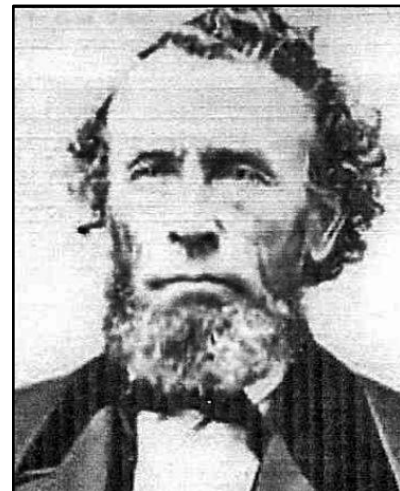
¹⁷⁵ Jedediah M. Grant was born in New York in 1816, joined the church in 1833 at the age of 17, marched with Zion's Camp the next year, and later served multiple missions. He was Major General of the Nauvoo Legion. He married Caroline Van Dyke a week after the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. He was called back from the mission field in the east in 1847 to lead his Hundred to the Valley, traveling with two little girls: a three year old and a newborn. His wife Caroline had been very sick since her recent obstetrical delivery. After arriving in the Valley, Grant was ordained an apostle, served briefly in the First Presidency and as mayor of Salt Lake City before his early death at the age of 40.

While the balance of the camp arrived (word was brought) that Br. Jacob Weatherby¹⁷⁶ (sic) was shot by an Indian on his return from the Horn (Elkhorn) to Winter Quarters with some sisters who were sent back by the advice of P. P. Pratt. Shot on Saturday and died on Monday 21st at 8:30 am and buried on the West Bank of the Horn by Captain Grant.¹⁷⁷

In the camp roster,¹⁷⁸ Charles and George Crismon are listed among the males in Jacob Gates' Ten who were able to do military duty.¹⁷⁹ Charles was by this time 39 years old and Polly was 32. Their daughter Emily, who was born in the Ponca village, was by this time five months old. Their son Charles Jr. was three, Mary Ann was five, Samantha was seven, Esther Ann was nine, George was fourteen, and Martha was sixteen. The family was probably traveling in two wagons, possibly three.¹⁸⁰ The following families were the other members of their Ten.

Jacob Gates and his wife Mary had no children, but they were traveling with an eleven year old girl named Lavina Kelsey. Lavina's father had abandoned his family while crossing Iowa, and her mother had died just a month earlier in Winter quarters on May 17, 1847. Her six-year-old sister had died five months before that. Her 17 year old brother Stephen had already departed as a pioneer in Brigham Young's vanguard party, which happened at the time to be camped at Independence Rock, still 340 miles from Salt Lake City. Her two older sisters were living on the east side of the Missouri River among the Mormons in Pottawattamie County. The sisters never went west, but later married and stayed in Iowa.

Willard Snow, the captain of the Crismons' Fifty, was also a member of Gates' Ten with his wife Melvina, her two children under ten and his second wife, Susan Harvey, who was childless.



Jacob Gates

Another member of their Ten was fifty-three year old Fielding Garr, the head of one of the 20 families that had been left with Gates in the Pawnee Village. Garr, who had joined the church in 1840, traveled as a widower, his wife having died in Nauvoo in November 1844. Their oldest daughter,

¹⁷⁶ Jacob Wetherbee was a single 21 year old male in the Abraham O. Smoot/George B. Wallace Company. Little more is known about him. Such is often the case of Mormons who have no descendants to do their genealogy!

¹⁷⁷ All of Vance's quotations are from Transcript for John Vance journal, 1847 June-October 1849, *FamilySearch* Memories LKMS-CLZ.

¹⁷⁸ Church History Library MS 14290.

¹⁷⁹ Gates was 36 and married to Mary Minerva Snow, sister to the apostle Erastus Snow. His sister was married to Erastus Bingham, a member of the Ponca high council. Gates was born in Vermont and baptized by Orson Pratt in 1833. He was a member of Zion's Camp and experienced the Missouri troubles. It was he who took charge of the 20 families left at the Pawnee village when the Crismons and the rest of advance company moved to the Ponca Village the previous year. Years later in 1861 he served as European Mission President.

¹⁸⁰ The Ponca Company roster only listed one wagon, and Charles had taken another to Winter Quarters in October. He may also have had one of the wagons and teams that he and Brown bought in St. Louis.

who evidently never became a Mormon, was married and living in Indiana. The next daughter, Nancy, was married to Rodney Badger, who was now two months ahead of them, another pioneer in Brigham's vanguard group, so she and her one-year-old daughter were traveling with her father. Garr also brought his seven unmarried children ages four through 20.¹⁸¹

Another member of the Crismons' Ten was Rhoda Maria Carrington, the 25 year old wife of Albert Carrington, who also was traveling in Brigham Young's group. She had a seven-year-old daughter named Jane, who a decade later married Brigham Young Jr. Rhoda had lost three younger children in Nauvoo and one in Winter Quarters before her husband left for the Valley.

Also listed in the Ten was Joseph McDavis, who seems to have vanished from history.

William Bringham and his wife Ann were childless, having lost their eight month old boy the previous December in Winter Quarters. Mary Jane Dilworth, Ann's fifteen year old sister, traveled with them.

The last name listed for Gates' Ten was an eleven year old boy named Call, born in Indiana, whose first name is illegible on the roster. It is not clear which of the adults he was traveling with. This made 34 people in that Ten, twenty of them children. Altogether in Snow's Fifty were 160 individuals.

Franklin Knox Shedd, a non-Mormon participant in the massive Taylor/Pratt Company gave an interesting overview of the process.

Each hundred travels in double file, breaking their tracks or following in the tracks of the foremost as they choose. We generally break from four to six tracks of roads, and when we encamp, each hundred forms a circle, with gaps at each end, thus (illustration of a circle with openings on each side); the area in middle is used for a cattle yard in the night... Our location will probably be on a lake called "Utaw" (Utah), about thirty miles from the Great Salt Lake. (That is interesting. I have read that Jim Bridger changed Brigham Young's mind to settle in Utah Valley due to the hostility of the Timpanogos Utes.) We have in our company everything good for a settlement—the best of cattle and mules, and two gristmills,¹⁸² two six-pound cannons, a boat and a bell.¹⁸³

Fifteen year old Harrison Sperry,¹⁸⁴ a member the Fourth Ten of Snow's Fifty wrote:

The captains of the companies would go on ahead; they would seek a camping place. After a while the wagons would come up, 50 wagons on one side, 50 wagons on the other side forming a great corral to put our teams in.... At 5 o'clock each morning the bugle would sound as a signal for every man to attend prayers before leaving his wagon. Then the people

¹⁸¹ Fielding Garr later raised cattle on Antelope Island in the Great Salt Lake.

¹⁸² John Taylor may have had the second grinding stone: He later owned a mill.

¹⁸³ Franklin Knox Shedd, "The Road to California: The Mormons", Boston Museum.
<https://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/digital/collection/19CMNI/id/6914/rec/1>

¹⁸⁴ Harrison's mother had died at Pisgah the previous September, and his father and an older brother had died of "blackleg" (scurvy) in Hyland Grove on the east side of the Missouri River five months earlier. He was traveling with his 31 year old sister Betsy, her seven year old daughter Josephine, and two older teenage brothers.

would do their cooking, eat and feed their teams, etc. until 7 o'clock when the bugle would sound again, and the train would move on. At 8:30 p.m. the bugles were sounded again when all would have prayers in their wagons and be retired by 9:00 o'clock.¹⁸⁵

Jacob Gates wrote a long and colorful journal during the entire trip upon which I will base most of the following account, since the Crismons camped with him during the entire trip. He noted that they "left the Horn to join the remaining body" on June 21. Two other Tens had managed to start out a day or two earlier. He continued,

Our whole body were put in motion consisting of some 600 wagons, driving three abreast. Some little confusion, the captains not understanding the order alike. Some draw off their men in single file, others in platoons, supposing them to be more composed. They finally traveled by hundreds in line.¹⁸⁶

All of the detailed trail diaries agree that things were initially confusing, as the massive group learned how to work together. Initially there were many disagreements about who should go first, since those who followed were often overcome by dust. They tried to avoid this difficulty by spreading out in the flat areas into multiple lines abreast, but this caused complaints from the wagons traveling downwind. About five days out, Gates wrote:

Traveled in double file. Exceeding dusty, particularly for those on the leeward side. As it happened, our Fifty had traveled three days in their dust. Yesterday morning our captains proposed changing sides. They submitted with tolerable grace, informing us at the same time they should pray for a change in the wind. But it changed the next day, and we got our laugh.

Charles C. Rich and his Hundred came under criticism for running ahead of the other companies to avoid these issues, thus making things worse for others. When Rich was confronted, Gates wrote:

General Rich objected (that) if he went behind, he should have to have more teams. Brother Crismon remarked, "It was well spoken, and if they who went behind a little had to be helped to more teams, they who went behind all the time must be helped more abundantly.... When will all the Saints learn this great and important lesson that all things whatsoever ye would have others do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

Up to this point, all the territory was familiar to the Gates, Crismon, and Garr families as they passed the missionary station and the Pawnees' deserted village about a week into their trip. The company stopped around noon to look for a ford over the Loup River, and after ten miles they found what Gates judged "a tolerable ford, but a mighty crooked one, and started on a bee line for the Platte."

After two more weeks of travel along the north side of the Platte River, the cattle stampeded one night after everyone had gone to bed, causing chaos in the camp, since the cattle had been enclosed by the circle of wagons. John Vance wrote, "We lay all day in camp repairing the breaches, doctoring cattle whose horn was knocked off and (in) other ways hurt, however one cow

¹⁸⁵ Harrison Sperry papers, 1919-1926, folder 1, Page 1-2, Church History Library MS 8095.

¹⁸⁶ Jacob Gates Journals, 1836-1861, Church History Library MS 1501.

died, and one horse was killed having got his leg broke in the spree.” The cattle stampeded again three days later on July 17th, and this time 50 or 60 head went missing including an ox belonging to Charles Crismon.¹⁸⁷

They reached Grand Island on July 18th, where Erastus Bingham’s 26 year old son Sanford married 14 year old Martha Lewis, both of the Ponca settlement.¹⁸⁸ There, sister Eliza Snow conducted a meeting for the females.¹⁸⁹

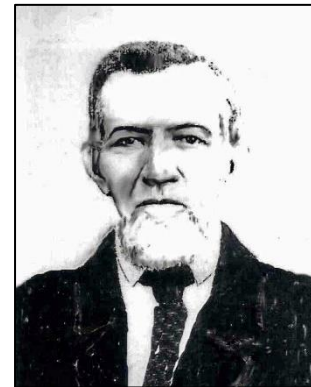
Meanwhile, nearing his destination on July 22nd Brigham Young sent an advance party that included some of the Mississippi Saints and their slaves into the Salt Lake Valley to plant potatoes, beans, and buckwheat before he famously made his own entrance on July 24th.

On July 25th Willard Snow’s Fifty, including Crismons, caught up with a company ahead of them, who had received letters sent back by the vanguard party. Gates wrote, “This morning ten men came into our camp from the pioneers with letters and all kinds of intelligence. Some of them (are) going to Winter Quarters, by whom we sent letters.” The “intelligence” included passing along the dramatic story of the Donner Party, which Sam Brannon had related to Brigham Young. Gates continued, “They tell us we are a month behind all the calculation of the pioneers, besides triple in number.” I wonder how Brigham reacted when he later learned of the size and lateness of the second group.

On Jacob Gates’ 34th birthday on July 30th, they reached Chimney Rock. He wrote, “Some crossed the river to get a better view of the rock.” He thought it looked like the Bunker Hill Monument. Four days later they reached Ft. Laramie, where they met Col. Kearny, who had commanded the Mormon Battalion, with his military escort coming from California. The Mormons weren’t much impressed by the fort. Gates described it as “...the remains of an old fort of some unburnt brick, a trading house, and a few white men without wives, and appear to be of but little more camp experience as Schlemihl without his shadow.”¹⁹⁰ Vance wasn’t impressed with Ft. Laramie either.

Came to old Fort Laramie. Watered and rested, no feed, crossed over to the south side of the river. Old fort about 150 ft. square with many habitations, inside all in a state of ruin. Built with unburnt brick and plastered with lime.

On Wednesday, August 4th Vance wrote,



John Vance

¹⁸⁷ The ox eventually found its way back to Winter Quarters over country covered with buffalo and inhabited by Indians. A friend of Charles paid the stray pound bill of five cents, and delivered it to Charles in the fall of 1848, having evidently used it to cross the plains himself. Charles H. Crismon, Charles Crismon, Western Pioneer, page 19 in *FamilySearch* memories, KGCB-N2B.

¹⁸⁸ They were traveling in the Daniel Spencer/Ira Eldredge Company.

¹⁸⁹ Eliza Snow was in the First Fifty of Grant’s company.

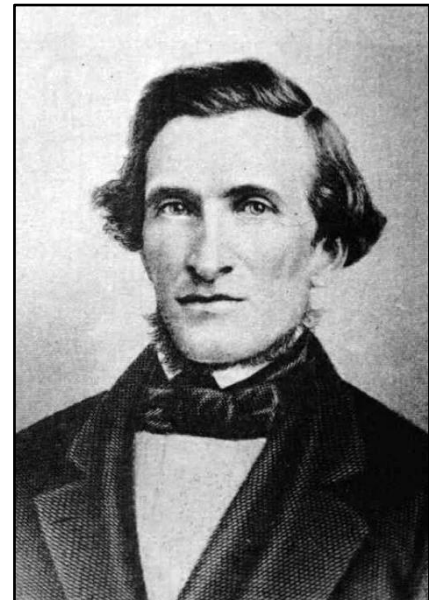
¹⁹⁰ Gates was referring to an 1814 German novella about a man who sold his shadow to the devil for a bottomless sack of gold, only to find out that a man without a shadow is shunned by society.

Dispatched Brothers Case and Chrisman (sic) with Brother Huffaker's¹⁹¹ buggy and my black colt and bay mare to go about 26 miles ahead to burn coal. Passed this morning by a company of our brethren from the (Mormon Battalion). Several women received letters from their husbands so there was joy in our lines for a while.

The companies stopped for two days for the blacksmiths to set iron wagon tires on August 13th and 14th, using the coals that Charles Crismon and Brother Case had gone ahead to prepare. On the day they left, another member of Snow's Fifty, Martha Jane Frazier Williams, went into labor. Gates wrote,

There was no place to stop on a very rough road and she delivered a son just at dark. She was in a very precarious situation, so they traveled on as fast as possible in the dark until they found a midwife with light. The child was dead, and they didn't get into camp until midnight.

Vance wrote that Phineas Young came from the vanguard group to him and "called on me for a horse on behalf of legal authority to go and see our pioneers and send back teams (for) our relief, and obtained." Evidently Brigham had sent his brother to aid the companies following him. Phineas was with Grant's Hundred for about three weeks, having met them 175 miles below Ft. Laramie. Jedediah Grant wrote a letter for Phineas to take back to Brigham. In it, Grant wrote that another of Brigham's brothers, John Hayden Young, had traveled with the company and had been of great use to them. Grant also mentioned that his own "wife had been very ill when I returned from the East, so much so that she was nearly unable to undertake the journey; her health had continued very bad and is so still; she feels the need of the prayers and faith of those who have influence with the Most High." Caroline Grant would soon be much worse.



Jedediah M. Grant

They encountered other visitors from the Valley. Gates wrote that they were overtaken by the pioneer Porter Rockwell on his return from Grant's first Fifty. Phineas Young was still with them and was able to direct them to good feed.

Crismon's Ten forded the Platte River on August 23rd and passed some other companies. That day, Vance noted, "One of (Charles) Crismon's oxen dead. Several others (oxen) sick and dead in camp." Oxen died on the 25th, 28th 29th and 30th as well. The brethren met to figure out what was happening and decided it was because wagons were hauling unequal loads. That must have been a problem for Charles Crismon, since he was carrying a millstone. But when the members of the Fifty were asked to equalize them, there was considerable conflict.

¹⁹¹ Simpson D. Huffaker was captain of the Fifth Ten.

On August 26th, John Brown, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and six of the Twelve left the Valley to return to Winter Quarters. There were 107 men in 107 wagons.¹⁹² They had only been in the Valley for 33 days.

Crismon's Ten camped on the Sweetwater on August 27th, where the gentile traveler, Franklin Knox Shedd, recorded the following:

At a camp on the Platte river, near the Sweetwater, a man proposed to go to the mountains in the north—apparently but a short distance—and bring down a snowball. He set out at noon and was gone all day till dark when the camp was alarmed for his safety, and many sallied out on their horses in search of him. He was found about midnight, in the mountains, quite “tuckered out.” The distance was found to be 15 miles.

It was now ten weeks since they left the Elkhorn. They had made two thirds of their journey and lost a third of their cattle. Shedd wrote, “Wolves are very numerous, and some panthers (cougars) have been seen. We have lost about sixty head of cattle; 20 have died from poison, and 40 have strayed away among the buffalo herds.”

Happily, on the last day of August, Captain Snow came up from behind and announced that he had found some of their lost cattle fifteen miles below Laramie.

On September 2nd Jedediah M. Grant's infant died, and his wife was failing. They met 65 pioneers and soldiers returning to their families at the Bluffs. The next day it was cold enough to freeze water. The following day Gates wrote,

We were awoke by the cry of “snow,” and sure enough our fears were realized for it was snowing considerably and nothing but sage to build a fire with. We hitched up and drove about 10 miles and camped, where we had all the mountains on either side covered with snow.

On September 5th Sister Grant had another poor spell. A few wagons stopped, but the rest moved on. The next day Vance wrote, “Monday the sixth. Made today 18 (miles.) Crismon's ox dead on road.” He had lost another one! I don't know how he managed to go on. Some of the men were hooking their milk cows up with the oxen.

John Brown and Brigham Young's company crossed South Pass on September 7th on their way to Winter Quarters. Brown wrote in his diary that day at Strawberry Creek,

We met the last companies and camped with them. Here I met brother Charles Crismon, who had one of my wagons and team loaded with provisions and seed grain. I engaged one of the soldiers, John Gould, to turn back and take my outfit and raise a crop next year for me.

From Jacob Gates' diary,

The Quorum of the Twelve were in this camp upon their homeward route. We rejoice very much to see them notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather. The next evening the

¹⁹² They arrived at Winter Quarters 67 days later on October 31. John Brown reached Mississippi in December and organized the rest of the Mississippi Saints. Thirteen families consisting of 56 white persons and 34 blacks departed on March 10, 1848 and arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in October.

Twelve gave us a description of our new home. September 10th we took our leave of the pioneers.

Vance had more to say about the visit of the pioneers.

President Brigham Young said he had a few things to say, would like to have the people together. He saw them about their wagons, said notwithstanding we had all passed inspection at Winter Quarters, he would not be afraid to venture a prophecy, (that) many would be out before the first of February. Said all had been warned time and again not to start this journey without year and a half's provisions.

Brigham was scolding them for running out of supplies.

Gates wrote that he spoke three days later with Commander Stockton from California, who had a party of 40 or 50 men and 200 horses and mules.

The Crismons forded the Green River at noon on September 17th. Gates was impressed, "One of the prettiest springs of water I ever beheld. We followed it down five miles and camped on it. Finally, the weather is warm and pleasant. We are 176 miles from the valley."

Five days later Jacob Gates wrote his impression of Ft. Bridger.

Ft. Bridger consists of two houses, a fort, a store, and seven or eight lodges. A few tradesmen with squaws for wives and one white woman who was left by the Oregon company about a year ago. She married a Frenchman and has one child. Here we overtook our first Fifty. I feel to join heartily (in an unsettled part of America) with the Irishman when he prayed that the Lord would remember in mercy the poor Irishman who was 7,000 miles from his native country and 300 from any other place.

The next day he wrote,

Reached Bear River. This day's drive (was) very hard on sister Grant. The next day we were summoned in haste to Br. Grant's wagon. We found her sinking fast. About eight o'clock she gave up the ghost. Her last words were, "Sisters, I thank you for all your kindnesses. Forgive me for my impatience," and after a little, "Lord, Jesus receive my spirit." It was thought best, as we were near the valley, to furnish a horse team and have Captain Grant and a few others go ahead and take her into the valley and bury her. According to his request, the brethren split up some chests and made her a coffin while the sisters proceeded to lay her out after the order of the holy priesthood in fine linen, clean and white. Brother Grant left us early for the valley September 27th, 75 miles.

Snow's Fifty was later met in the canyon by Brother Grant coming toward them with more teams from the valley, and that day they got their first peep into the valley. They traveled ten more miles over mountains and made their last encampment 14 miles from their destination. When Charles and his family arrived the next day, they pitched their tents on the western part where the old fort was being built.¹⁹³

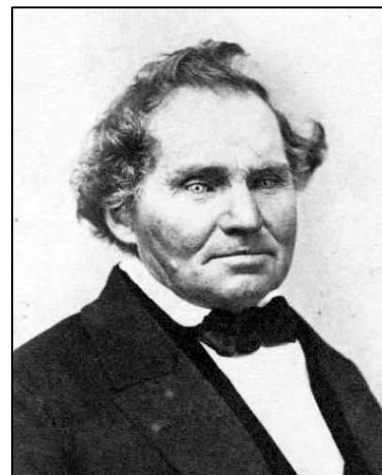
¹⁹³ The approximate borders of the old fort are the same as present Pioneer Park, bordered by Third and Fourth South and Third and Fourth West streets.

Four days after his own arrival in the valley, Brigham Young marked a location between two forks of City Creek famously saying, “Here will be the Temple of our God.” The first building in the Valley was a bowery built near that spot. Ten days later they began to build the fort three blocks south and west of the temple site, the outside wall made of logs, the rest of adobe. On August 22 Heber C. Kimball suggested that the river in the valley be named the Western Jordan. All the valley’s rivers and canyons received names that day.

On October 4th, the very day that Charles and his families arrived in the valley, the newly reorganized High Council of Great Salt Lake City met for the first time. John Smith, Joseph Smith’s uncle and the Crismons’ former branch president, continued as stake president, but his counselors were now the newly arrived Charles C. Rich and John Young. Six of the new Council members had been captains in the lately arrived companies including Willard Snow and John Vance from Charles Crismon’s Fifty and Charles’ brother-in-law, Abraham O. Smoot.

As the first order of business, President John Smith asked what Brigham Young’s views had been on a possible mill on City Creek. Lorenzo Young responded that Brigham wished to have a grist mill there for his own use, and that if anyone would build one, he would satisfy them for it.¹⁹⁴ Council members Sherwood and Eldredge of the mill committee said that a mill was planned for Mill Creek to the south if the Indians would permit, and they had no means to build on City Creek.

The new council was meeting daily. The following day John Taylor urged the council to delineate a tract of land for farming so that planting could get underway, and four of the council were appointed to lay one out. On October 9th the mill committee reported that they had not been able to examine the proposed spot on City Creek, and further time was granted. There was confusion reported about placing the newly arrived wagons in the fort. The Council suggested filling the middle of the fort with wagons and urged the Tens to build cabins together as much as possible.



Alonzo Dow Young

Nine days after the Crismons arrived, the High Council met at the house of President Smith at eight a.m. Ira Eldredge reported that the mill committee had found a good site on City Creek¹⁹⁵ which would not interfere with irrigation, and that Brother Charles Crismon was ready to build there, if permitted to do so. The Council accepted the report and ordered that the mill builders go to work speedily. They would “sustain whoever built the mill in labor, good pay, and as much grain as the people could be persuaded to spare.”¹⁹⁶ Brother Archibald Gardner was granted permission to build a saw mill on another creek eight or ten miles north of the city.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ City Creek ran right through Brigham Young’s property on South Temple.

¹⁹⁵ “(The site was) near where Third (street) now crosses the bend of that stream.” Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah, Vol IV., p. 113.

¹⁹⁶ Salt Lake City Council Minute Book, Church History Library MS 3426.

¹⁹⁷ Probably present Mill Creek in Bountiful.

Kate Carter of DUP wrote that the millstones for the mill on City Creek were chiseled by Charles from the mountains east of Salt of Salt Lake City. But Frank Pomeroy wrote: He took with him the first French burr stones for a flouring mill, having been in the milling business in the east, and settled on City Creek where he built the first grist mill in the state of Utah.”¹⁹⁸ It doesn’t seem possible that Charles could have been “ready to build there” nine days after arrival if he needed to build a millstone from native granite.¹⁹⁹ Furthermore, it conflicts with common sense and Charles’ own history.

Charles Crismon was a third generation professional miller. It is likely that his Germanic grandfather, Michael Christmann, ran a mill on Dutch Buffalo Creek in North Carolina. Charles’ father was a miller as were his older brothers, who built several mills in Kentucky and Illinois. Charles himself had built a mill in Industry Township and another in Ramus, Illinois. He knew the craft.

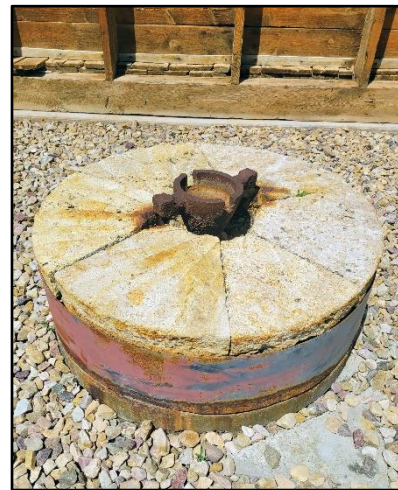
It is unlikely that he brought a millstone from one of his mills in Illinois—that would seem incompatible with his assignment as captain of Miller’s company. That is why I believe that he bought a stone on that second trip to Missouri, possibly in Saint Louis.

American millers had quit importing millstones from England after the Revolutionary War, and although some were quarried locally, the best stones were imported from France. They were known as French Burr stones, made of sections of sharp freshwater quartz cemented together, backed with plaster, and held together with an iron ring. Typically, the quartz pieces were imported as ballast of ships and assembled in American factories.

French Burr stones were typically four feet in diameter but could vary from two to five feet and from eight to twelve inches in thickness. Four feet is the size of the millstone that Frederic Kesler used in Winter Quarters. It seems likely that Charles’ family typically used large millstones, since his brother was killed by one, probably while cleaning or sharpening it.

The Council minutes referred later to Charles’ project as “a small grist mill with one run of small stones.” I was able to learn that a smaller 42” millstone weighs around 1,400 pounds, which could fit into a Murphy Wagon, the most popular prairie schooner sold in St. Louis at the time, which could carry about a ton of freight with two yokes of oxen.

That fall many of the discharged Mormon Battalion members were returning to the valley from California in small groups. Levi Hancock and two companies of Battalion men arrived in Salt Lake



Thirty-six inch French Burr millstone in pioneer park, Ephraim, Utah

¹⁹⁸ W. Earl Merrill, Charles Crismon Dec. 1973, p. 24, *FamilySearch* Memories KGCB-N2B.

¹⁹⁹ Newel Knight, who was a professional millwright, recorded in his journal that he found a rock near the Ponca settlement that could serve as a millstone. He hauled it home and mentioned that he was still working on it four weeks later. In fact, he did not record finishing it before his death two months after that.

Valley on October 16th. Thirty-two of them, including Charles' old missionary companion, Daniel Tyler, set out immediately despite the danger of winter to join their families at the Missouri River.

On October 21st, Lorenzo Young wrote in his diary that he sowed the first acre of wheat in the valley. Two weeks later he sowed another acre, and two weeks after that sowed a third and "dragged it in."²⁰⁰ Young had claimed some land outside of the fort by virtue of his family standing and reputation as a horticulturist, having brought many types of seeds. Three days after Lorenzo's planting, the captains of Hundreds, Fifties, and Tens met with the High Council and were charged to locate and survey the farming lands immediately.

Levi Jackman was one of the twelve high councilors. By the end of October all the companies had moved into the fort, and according to Jackman, "made a large show, living out of their wagons." Some of them had plenty of supplies for themselves, but many had little left, and neither did Levi himself nor most of the rest of the vanguard company that Brigham had left behind when he returned to Winter Quarters. To make matters worse, as Levi wrote,

We now found (that) our fort, which contained 160 rooms, would contain only about a quarter of the people. It being too late to make adobes, most of the people got some kind of timber for houses and enlarged the fort on north and south making from north to south 160 rods and forty east and west. Some of the brethren that had nothing to eat got a chance to work for some that had plenty and got their board for their work, which was better than to starve. The fort was enclosed and secured with gates, and almost everyone lived there that winter.²⁰¹



Harriet Young

One exception was Lorenzo Young, who sold his two houses in the fort and built a log cabin on his land near the Crismon's mill on City Creek, despite the risk of Indians. On one occasion, Young's wife Harriet released a dog which had been acquired for exactly such a situation on an Indian who was threatening her.²⁰² After calling off the mastiff, she washed and bandaged the Indian's wounds and released him without his bow and arrows. Indian attacks in the valley were unusual, although stealing was not. Others who settled outside the fort were Peregrine Sessions, who settled about ten miles north of the fort (present Bountiful), and Hector C. Haight who camped about six miles further north on a creek now known as Haight's Creek in Kaysville, looking for good pasture land.

By November, the Crismon mill was in operation. Jackman wrote that a company of men was sent to California "...to get some spring wheat and other seeds and cows and make such trades as they thought best in the name of the people."

On November 7th, the fort was divided into wards, and seven more bishops were appointed.

²⁰⁰ Lorenzo D. Young Papers, 1846-1894, Church History Library MS 1538, Diary February 1846-October 1852.

²⁰¹ Levi Jackman Journal, 1847 March-1849 April, Church History Library MS 12402. Also in *FamilySearch* Memories 97QR-C9X.

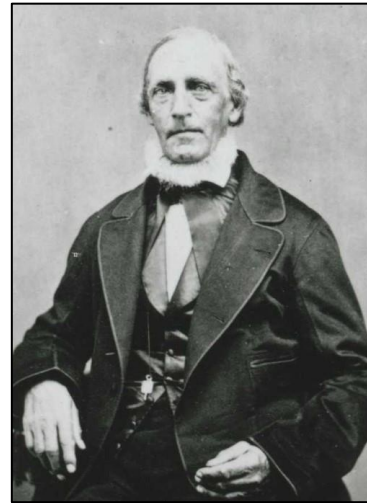
²⁰² History of Utah, Whitney pp. 367-8.

The first two schoolteachers in the fort were 37 year old Julian Moses and 16 year old Mary Jane Dilworth. Moses who was married but had no children and taught out of a log house he had built, and Mary Jane taught in a tent in the fort in the winter of 1847-48. Both had arrived that fall in the Jedediah M. Grant Company. Mary Jane was born into an educated family, had been baptized, and moved to Nauvoo in April 1846 during the exodus and lived a year in Winter Quarters. Martha Crismon specifically mentioned Mary Jane as her school teacher. They were about the same age. It would seem reasonable to assume that George and Esther Ann were also involved in school (ages 13 and seven), although George probably worked in his father's mill.²⁰³

Lorenzo Young had finished his cabin on November 23rd and completed a second the 23rd of December, where he had a Christmas dinner with John Smith, John Young, Br. Pierce and their wives, also Br. Grant and Sister Snow. Father Smith blessed his little Lorenzo (two months old.)

Levi Jackman wrote,

Winter had come on and it must be a long time before we could raise our own bread, if ever. A number of the battalion started back to Winter Quarters to their families. Our main dependence for living was our cattle and many of them had been sent back and the remainder was very poor... A few Indians came and camped near us for the winter. They lived mostly on seeds and roots and wolf meat. We found (that) they eat the large thistle root. I went out to get some one day, but by the time I had got about a bushel, the snow fell and covered the ground, and I could find no more. I only regretted that I could not get enough of them. They tasted much like parsnip.



Levi Jackman

He continued,

(Some people) appeared to be disposed to make the necessities of the destitute their opportunity, and sold things, I thought, rather high. I feared that such a principle if not checked might prove our destruction. I went to Father John Smith who was then the president of the place and recommended that prices should be set by the council for labor, provisions, etc.

Probably responding to Jackman, the Stake Presidency and the High Council "felt the need to regulate the price of grinding and all things worthy of note." No elucidation was provided in the minutes, but there must have been an issue with Charles, since no other gristmill was in operation at that time. The Council approved the building of a bridge over Fort Creek, a branch of City Creek,

²⁰³ Mary Jane Dilworth married Francis Hammond on November 17, 1848, a convert who had joined the church in California after living in the Sandwich Islands.

and to call in men to do the necessary labor, presumably to facilitate the transport of wheat and flour. William Leffingwell was given permission to build a turning lathe on City Creek.²⁰⁴

The next council meeting was held by candlelight on December 3, 1847. They decided "that Brother Crismon be allowed twenty cents per bushel for grinding and that he keep an account of the number of bushels ground, who for, and the time occupied in grinding, and if it does not suffice, the Council (is) to consider the matter again." It sounds as if the Council was responding to a complaint about Charles' fees.²⁰⁵



Charles Crismon's Mill in City Creek Canyon (no longer exists, but a monument is there.)

The winter was deceptively mild. On January 12, 1848, Lorenzo Young reported that he had just finished sowing his winter wheat.

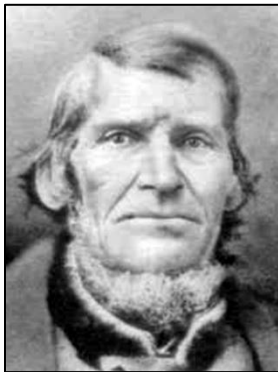
²⁰⁴ Leffingwell had arrived the previous September and moved in 1849 to California, possibly with the Crismons, where he and his sons briefly worked in the gold fields before building a sawmill in Sonoma County.

²⁰⁵ The traditional rate of payment at grist mills before currency was common was a share of the wheat processed, typically 1/16 to 1/8. In Plymouth Colony in the 1600's the toll was 1/16. In Virginia in 1670 it was 1/8. It varied among the colonies, ranging from 1/4 to 1/16, the latter being the charge in George Washington's mill. In Kentucky, where the Crismon family ran a mill in 1820, the toll was 1/8, which is probably also the toll that the Crismon's had charged in Illinois. Most of the time tolls were controlled by government, so the council's fixing of the price is not unprecedented. However, without knowing the price of a bushel of wheat, it is hard to know how equitable the price of \$ 0.20 per bushel was. If wheat was worth \$1.60 per bushel, his toll was 1/8. If it was \$3.60 per bushel he was only getting 1/16. The Gardner mill in West Jordan put out 10-16 bushels per hour during the move South. If Crismon's mill produced five bushels per hour, he would have made a dollar per hour, a good wage in those days.

The weather is warm and pleasant, the grass is growing fairly.... The winter has been very mild with only a little snow in the valley. Cattle have lived well by grazing. The large wolves have killed some of our oxen and cows, and the Indians near Utah Lake drove off some which was truly a loss to us under our impoverished circumstances. But we hope for better times.²⁰⁶

The Mexican War ended with the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848, which ceded California, Nevada, Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona to the United States. This invalidated property claims in Utah made under Spanish Law including the purchase of John Goodyear lands around Davis County.

The Council granted permission for Archibald and Robert Gardiner to put up their sawmill on Mill Creek. Young wrote on March 1st, "The weather is warm and pleasant. I sowed my spring wheat and oats and some pea beans." By spring there were nearly 1,671 people living in 423 log and adobe huts in the Old Fort in Great Salt Lake City.²⁰⁷



Alanson Eldredge

Charles' name came up in the Council minutes again on March 4th. There was another complaint about him. "Crismon's and Eldredge's difference about some land called up; after hearing the matter it was decided that Br. A. Eldredge²⁰⁸ occupy 10 acres of the disputed ground, and Br. Crismon occupy the balance for farming purposes this season." Two days later Charles was mentioned again. "...Brother Charles Crismon has a small grist mill, with one run of small stones, in operation on City Creek...also, Brother Crismon has the frame and gearing of a saw mill nearly ready to put up." More work was done on the road to the Crismon mill.

On April 1st a law was passed against Sabbath breakers. Three weeks later Charles enrolled in the high priest quorum.

Lorenzo Young wrote on May 13th, "We have had cool nights with occasional frosts, but we still keep up good courage hoping for the best. Our provision runs low, and we feel anxious to have our garden sauce²⁰⁹ come on." But two weeks later,

This day we have had a damper put upon our hopes as it regards garden sauce. We had grappled with the frost and saved...most of our things by covering them up and we had not anticipated any further trouble, but today to our utter astonishment the crickets came by millions, sweeping everything before them. They first attacked a patch of beans for us and in twenty minutes there was not a vestige of them to be seen. They next swept our peas,

²⁰⁶ Lorenzo Young diary.

²⁰⁷ Whitney, History of Utah, vol I., p.377.

²⁰⁸ Alanson Eldredge was the father of Ira Eldredge of the High Council. Alanson had been on the High Council in Cutler's camp and served on the committee to select the site for Winter Quarters. Because he was considered too old to cross the plains at the age of 66, he made his own coffin to take in his wagon. Although Eldredge owned some pasture property by the warm springs north of the fort, he and his son Ira had also been allotted farmland adjoining Charles Crismon's land east of the five-acre survey which later became Sugar House.

²⁰⁹ "Garden sauce" is an old expression for tomatoes and squash.

then came into our garden, took everything clean. We went out with (brooms) and undertook to drive them, but they were too strong for us.

That night there was severe frost, but the crickets just moved on to other crops.

Today the crickets have commenced on our corn and small grain. They have eat(en) off 12 acres for Br. Rosencrantz, seven for Charles and are now taking Edmunds.... (The next day) They destroyed three quarters of an acre of squashes on our place, two acres of millet and our rye and are now to work in our wheat. What will be the result? We know not.

There is a gap in the diary until July 24th, so I was disappointed to have missed Lorenzo's account of the seagulls. But omitting the seagull story was common to other diarists who documented the cricket infestation, such as Eliza R. Snow, Patty Sessions, and the school teacher Julian Moses. In fact, one historian was unable to find a single eyewitness account by any pioneer diarist.²¹⁰

However, the leading brethren did notice the seagulls' role. In a June 9, 1848 letter to Brigham Young at Kanesville, the Council wrote, "The sea gulls have come in large flocks from the lake and sweep the crickets as they go; it seems the hand of the Lord is in our favor." Twelve days later, "Crickets are still quite numerous and busy eating but between the gulls and our own efforts and the growth of our crops we shall raise much grain in spite of them." Patriarch John Smith remembered that the gulls "came every morning for about three weeks, when their mission was apparently ended, and they ceased coming."

It appears that the birds were helpful, but not everyone saw it as the miracle that it eventually became. The event was not even mentioned in the minutes of the High Council or in the *Millennial Star*, the Mormon newspaper in England. Other than the two letters to Brigham, the only known recorded mention of the seagull miracle came five years later in a general conference talk by Orson Hyde in September 1853, when he said, "The gulls had been agents prepared by the hand of providence."

Utah's historian Orson F. Whitney was not an eyewitness to the seagull incident, having been born in 1855. His mother was Helen Mar Kimball, daughter of Heber C. Kimball, who must have told him her own story. This is a more embellished version of the story from his *History of Utah*, published in 1892:

When it seemed that nothing could stay the devastation, great flocks of gulls appeared, filling the air with their white wings and plaintive cries, and settled down upon the half-ruined fields. All day long they gorged themselves, and when full, disgorged and feasted again, the white gulls upon the black crickets, live hosts of heaven and hell contending, until the pests were vanquished, and the people were saved.²¹¹

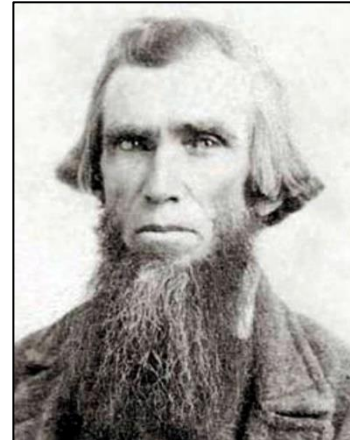
Whatever the role of the seagulls, the Crismons were there to witness the whole story. Martha Jane Crismon simply wrote: "We were in Salt Lake the time the crickets took the grain." Not a word about seagulls.

²¹⁰ For an academic discussion of the seagull story, read William Hartley, *Mormons, Crickets, and Gulls: A New Look at an Old Story*, *Utah Historical Quarterly*, Vol 38, 1970, No. 3.

²¹¹ Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, Vol. I, p. 378.

On June 5, 1848, Brigham Young set out on his second trip to the Valley with 1,229 people in 397 wagons. Heber C. Kimball brought 662 people in 226 wagons, and Willard Richards had 526 people in 169 wagons. Included in the vast company were the remaining Mississippi Saints. Daniel Tyler, Charles' old missionary companion, was among them. Winter Quarters were nearly emptied, the last wagons leaving July 3rd, but many people remained in Pottawatomie County on the east side of the river.

Despite the crickets, the harvest was bountiful, at least for the settlers already in the Valley. On August 10th, a feast was held in a bowery that was erected in the center of the fort, which now had about 1,800 inhabitants, the growth largely to returning Battalion members bringing gold dust, which had been discovered the previous January by Mormon soldiers.



Daniel Tyler

On the day of the harvest feast, sixteen year old Martha Crismon was married to John Moss Lewis by Jedediah M. Grant. Martha and John met each other in the Ponca camp. John Lewis was born in Simpson County, Kentucky, Feb. 16, 1829. His father, Benjamin Lewis, was killed at Hawn's mill when John was nine years old. John's uncle, Beason Lewis, who was not a Mormon, took in John, his four siblings, and his widowed mother, Joanna Ryan. When John was 17, his mother died just as the evacuation of Nauvoo was getting underway. Uncle Beason, who had promised to raise the children as Mormons, took the children west, and they all ended up in the Ponca settlement along with the families of two of Beason's brothers.

The month after Martha's wedding, Charles Crismon's mother, Elizabeth Hagler Chrisman, died in Geneva, and a month later so did his brother John.

The first wagons of Brigham Young's second company reached the Valley about three weeks later. All members of the giant company arrived within a month of September 20, 1848. John Brown came on October 11th with the apostle Amasa Lyman and 13 more Mississippi families (56 white and 34 black, bringing the total number of southern Saints in the Valley to about 200 whites and 37 blacks. Under the direction of Apostle Lyman, they settled nine miles southeast of the fort, forming the first town in the Valley outside of Great Salt Lake City. It was known as the Cottonwood or Mississippi Ward.²¹² Brown wrote,

It was some time before we could find where our farming land would be exactly located. It was finally concluded for us to settle between the two Cottonwoods (Creeks). We got logs and put up log cabins for wintering.²¹³

At some point the Council must have allowed Charles to begin charging a grinding toll rather than a price per bushel, since on September 30th as the new immigrants were pouring into the Valley, Charles was granted an increase from 1/16 to 1/10 per bushel milled. The newly arrived Apostle

²¹² The town still exists, now called Holladay after the Mississippian John D. Holladay, one of the first bishops.

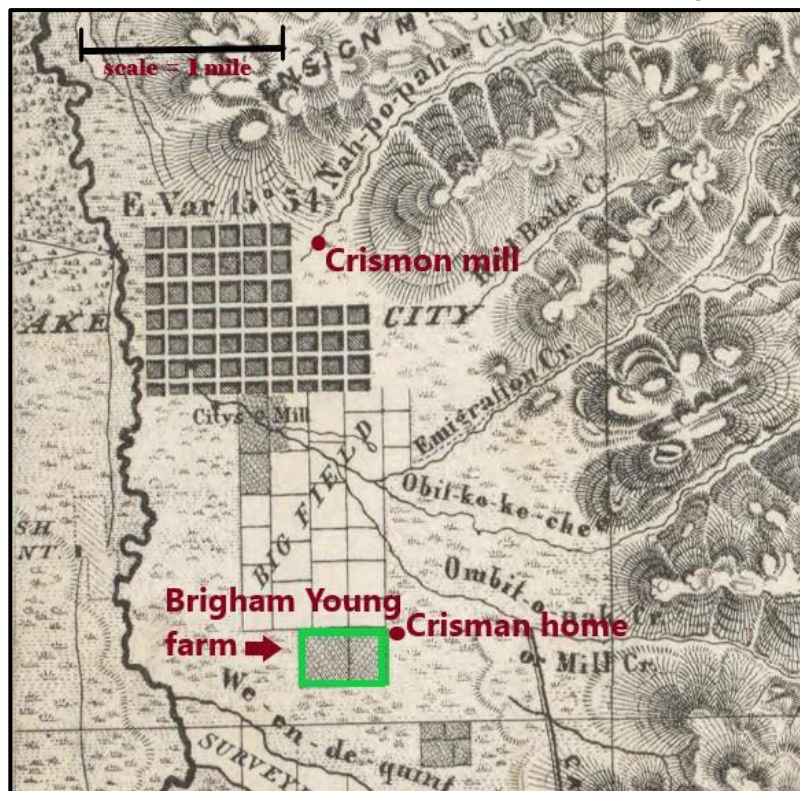
²¹³ By 1849 there were 75 families, most of whom left with Charles C. Rich and Amasa M. Lyman for San Bernardino in March 1851. Most of them returned in 1858 to southern Utah and some became the first to colonize Arizona.

Heber C. Kimball, thinking the toll too steep, recommended to the Council that the mill be closed, but it was not. Since it was on Brigham Young's property, it actually belonged to him, and Brigham made good on his promise to "satisfy" whoever built a mill on City Creek and bought it from Charles.

Conference that October was held in the bowery. John Smith was appointed Church Patriarch and Charles C. Rich took his place as stake president with John Young and Erastus Snow as counselors. The city increased from about 2,500 to nearly five thousand. That fall is when city lots were distributed to the settlers. According to Whitney, this is also when eight hundred acres were plotted in five and ten acre fields and distributed by lot constituting the Big Field. Some people moved before winter, but most stayed in the fort until spring, when many dragged their houses onto their farms or lots, and the fort was abandoned in 1849.

John Brown, as a southerner, found the winter harsh. He wrote, "It snowed and turned cold the first week in December. We lived in our tents, warmed up by my stove. Soon after the snow, I got into my house." He lost his four-month-old son to whooping cough on December 21. His mother-in-law died February 13 and was buried in the same place. This winter was considerably more severe than the previous one, and there were many more mouths to feed. February 5th registered -33 degrees. Three quarters of a pound of flour were allotted per person per day.

On February 14, 1849, Great Salt Lake City was divided into 19 wards, each three blocks square. The rest of the Valley lying south of the city and east of the Jordan River was organized into four wards. Canyon Creek Ward embraced the five-acre survey and everything east of it.²¹⁴ Mill Creek



²¹⁴ Canyon Creek Ward later was called Sugar House Ward, a name that is retained today for that area of the Salt Lake Valley.

Ward embraced the ten-acre survey and all east of it. Cottonwood Ward lay between the ten-acre survey and Cottonwood Creek. The Mississippi Ward was everything in the Valley south of Cottonwood Creek.

Charles used the proceeds of the sale of his mill to build a home in the Canyon Creek Ward. His is said to have been the first home in Salt Lake with milled wood roof and floors, no doubt coming from his own saw mill in upper City Creek.²¹⁵

In March 1849 several parties of Mormon Battalion veterans reached Salt Lake with news of the gold at Sutter's Mill. Having no other place to live, they swelled the fort to 1,800 inhabitants and worsened the food shortage. In March, John S. Higbee settled with 30 families on the Provo River.

Levi Jackman added two people to his household when the large group arrived that fall--his wife Delia and her 16 year old daughter Mary Sophia.²¹⁶ They were all starving. Levi wrote:

Before the approach of spring some people was out of breadstuff and times again began to look dark as to a living till harvest. Many of those that had it held onto it while others would impart to the last. I had enough for my one used, but by taking in two and giving to the destitute, I have not enough to last me until within six weeks of harvest.

John Brown also wrote about the harsh winter.

The snow was not entirely gone until towards the last of March. It was sometimes nearly a foot deep all over the valley. It was a miracle that our animals lived through the winter, (but most of them did.) During the fall and winter, the gold fever raged pretty high. The soldiers that came in last summer from California brought gold with them which they had dug in the mines on that country. It put the people in a terrible fever to go there and get gold, for so many of them had long been poverty-ridden because of gentile oppression. And it was with great difficulty that the authorities of the Church could restrain them. In spite of everything, there were several who went and took their families, contrary to the counsel that was first given to them. Some of them went with such bad feelings that the presidency had to send a company on to keep them from poisoning the minds of those who were in that country who had never been here; for which purpose Brother Amasa M. Lyman and others went.

According to Martha's son Walter, Martha and John Lewis lived in Salt Lake City until April 13th, when they moved to the California gold fields with the Crimons, two of those families decried by John Brown. In her brief autobiography, Martha was less precise: "In May in company with Father's family and an organized company my husband and I went to colonize in California." The words "organized company" suggest that the Crimons did not travel alone, but I could find no evidence of a church company that left at that time. Whitney wrote that the famous gold rush of gentiles from the east began to pass through Utah beginning in June enroute for California, so Charles got the jump on them, ahead by at least a month or two, although miners from California and Oregon had arrived well ahead of him.

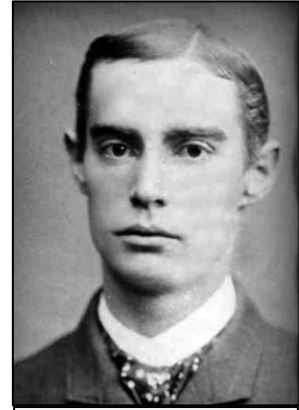
²¹⁵ The home was near the site of the old penitentiary, now in Sugar House Park.

²¹⁶ Mary Sophia Reed is my 2nd great grandmother.



Esther Ann Crismon

I know very little about Martha's sister Esther Ann²¹⁷ during the year and a half spent in the Salt Lake Valley. By the time their family left in May of 1849, she had become the number two woman in the family at age thirteen when Martha Jane left the household the previous August. Although Martha and John traveled in the same company with Crismons to California, Esther Ann probably played an adult's role caring for her parents' children, now nine, six, five, and two years old, since her mother was in her seventh month of pregnancy. George was nearly 16 and for years doing a man's work.



George Crismon

The party took the longer Humboldt route through Idaho to avoid the desert but ended up crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains where the Donner party had been stranded three years earlier, and finished their trip at Sutter's Fort, which is now Sacramento, on July 3, 1849.²¹⁸

Amasa Lyman had arrived about six weeks earlier. He was busy visiting all the Mormons that he could find to collect tithing.

I figured the family would stay at Sutter's Fort at least until the baby was born, but it had become a raucous tent city, only a place for Charles to get oriented and outfitted. Their ninth child Ellen was born about 50 miles up the river at their gold diggings in Placer County July 19th, just two weeks after their arrival at the fort, while Charles, young George, and John Lewis panned on the north fork of the American River, reportedly producing \$100 a day in gold.

Before winter came, the family moved to San Francisco, where they lived at Mission Dolores.

²¹⁷ Esther Ann Crismon is also my 2nd great grandmother.

²¹⁸ Sacramento was founded only seven months earlier by John Sutter, Jr. and the Mormon Samuel Brannan and was not incorporated until February 1850.

Epilogue:

Charles Crismon went on to make more history, which is well documented. Here is just a brief summary.

Charles and his family moved in July 1850 to the Chino Ranch in southern California, where he helped to found the settlement of San Bernardino, and where he literally greeted²¹⁹ many of the Mississippi Saints when they arrived from the Salt Lake Valley in 1851. There he built a saw mill and grist mill and became an important freighter between San Bernardino and Los Angeles and served on the High Council. When Brigham Young called the outlying settlements to return to Utah in 1858 in response to the threat of Johnston's Army, he returned with his herds, flocks, and freight wagons to Salt Lake City and settled in the historic Fourteenth Ward where he continued freighting to California and to the east. He contracted to grade the Transcontinental Railway, engaged in mining and stock raising. He introduced the system of shepherding in Utah of transporting animals from the mountains in the summer to the desert in the winter and is said to have been the wealthiest person in the state after Brigham Young. At the age of 72 he moved to Arizona,²²⁰ where he was one of the six founders of Mesa and built yet another grist mill. He died there on March 23, 1890.

Each decade of Charles Crismon's life deserves a book at least as long as this one, and there have been several important biographies written. The pioneer biography by Orson F. Whitney²²¹ from which I derived the brief summary above is a great place to start and has influenced many of the subsequent histories written by his descendants. The biography written by his daughter Martha Jane Lewis provides the only eyewitness account of Charles' early adult life. Other notable works are the biography by Charles H. Crismon²²² and the work of Lonni Chrisman²²³ as well as my own work on his grandfather and father that includes Charles' younger life.²²⁴

Charles Crismon was a remarkable man.

²¹⁹ When the Mormons arrived at San Bernardino, Charles Crismon was already living there and reputedly hauled a much-needed wagonload of potatoes from his farm to El Cajon Pass, where the immigrants were stranded while property was being purchased for their settlement.

²²⁰ Charles took with him three young polygamous wives, but Polly Crismon was tired of traveling and never left Utah. Although she made her home in Salt Lake City, she died in Harrisburg, Weber County on May 15, 1892, at the home of one of her married daughters.

²²¹ Orson F. Whitney, *History of Utah*, Volume IV., pages 113-114.

²²² Charles Crismon, *Western Pioneer*, *FamilySearch* Memories KGCB-N2B.

²²³ www.chrisman.org

²²⁴ Kim Bateman, Christmann, Christman, Crismon: From Palatine to Pioneering 1748 to 1842, *FamilySearch* Memories KGCB-N2B.

